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A FLOATING CITY
AND
THE BLOCKADE RUNNERS

BY
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"JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH"
ETC. ETC.

TRANSLATED BY HENRY FRITH

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BY JULES VERNE.

The English at the North Pole.

The Field of Ice.

Five Weeks in a Balloon.

A Journey to the Centre of the Earth.

**Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea.—
Part I.**

**Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea.—
Part II.**

A Floating City, and The Blockade Runners.

A Voyage Round the World.—South America.

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A Voyage Round the World.—New Zealand.

**From the Earth to the Moon, and Round the
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**Adventures of Three Englishmen and Three
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The Fur Country.—Part I.

The Fur Country.—Part II.

A FLOATING CITY.

CHAPTER I.

ON the 18th March, 1867, I arrived in Liverpool. The *Great Eastern* was to sail for New York in a few days, and I came to take my passage in her. A mere traveller for pleasure, a trip across the Atlantic in this gigantic steamship had great attractions for me. I had made up my mind to visit North America, but merely as the end and aim of my journey. The *Great Eastern* was the true attraction; the land celebrated by Cooper was of secondary importance.

The steamship was, in fact, a masterpiece of naval architecture. It was something more than a ship, it was a floating city, a section detached from English soil which, having crossed the sea, united itself to the American continent. I thought of this enormous mass borne upon the waves, its defiant struggle against opposing winds; its boldness in face of the sea, power

less to injure it; its indifference to the waves, its stability in the midst of that element which "knocks about" vessels like the *Warrior* and *Solferino* as if they were cockle-shells. But here my imagination stopped short. All these things I saw during the passage out as well as many others which do not pertain to the sea.

The *Great Eastern* is not merely a ship; if it be a microcosm and carry a little world along with it, one must not be astonished to meet there, as in more extended spheres of action, all the instincts, follies, and passions of the human race.

I proceeded from the railway station to the Adelphi Hotel. The *Great Eastern* was advertised to start on the 20th March. Being desirous to inspect the final preparations, I requested permission from Captain Anderson, the captain of the vessel, to occupy my berth on board at once. This favour he most politely accorded.

Upon the following day I went down to the docks which form a double line on the banks of the Mersey. Crossing the drawbridges, I reached the Prince's Landing-stage, a sort of floating raft, the point of embarkation for the numerous ferries which ply between Liverpool and Birkenhead, situated upon the opposite bank.

The Mersey, like the Thames, is not a large river, and is really unworthy the name of river, although it falls into the sea. It is simply a vast depression of the ground filled with water—a regular hole—the depth of which enables it to accommodate vessels of the first class, such as the *Great Eastern*, to which the majority of the ports

in the world are practically inaccessible. Owing to this natural dispensation, the banks of the Thames and the Mersey are crowded almost at their mouths by immense commercial cities—London and Liverpool respectively ; in the same way as Glasgow, under similar conditions, has been built upon the banks of the Clyde.

At the landing-stage lay a "tender," affiliated to the *Great Eastern*. I went on board, where I found a number of artificers already embarked for the "big ship." As seven o'clock sounded from the Victoria Clock-tower the tender "cast-off," and ascended the Mersey, on the flood tide, at a great rate.

We had scarcely left the landing-stage when I perceived amongst the spectators a young man, tall, and of that aristocratic appearance which is the distinguishing mark of the English officer. I fancied I recognised him as a friend of mine, a captain in one of the regiments then stationed in India, whom I had not seen for several years. But I must have been mistaken, for Captain MacElwin could not have left Bombay, as I might have known. Besides, MacElwin was a gay, careless fellow, a "cheery" companion to all, whereas this individual, though like my friend in feature, seemed sad, and burthened with a secret grief. However, I had no time to examine him more nearly, for the tender sped away, and the impression soon faded from my mind.

The *Great Eastern* was moored off the large warehouses about three miles up the river. She could not be seen from the Prince's Landing-stage, but at the first bend

of the stream I perceived the floating mass. She appeared like a small island half hidden in the fog. She lay stem on to us as she swung to the rising tide, but as the tender altered her course, the *Great Eastern* stood forth in all her enormous length. She looked what she was—immense. Three or four colliers alongside were discharging their loads through her port-holes, now open below the true “line of flotation.” These three-masted vessels looked like mere barges beside the *Great Eastern*. Their funnels did not even reach as high as her lower-deck “light-ports,” their topmast cross-tress did not reach her bulwarks. The giant could have hoisted up these vessels like so many steam-launches.

Meanwhile the tender was approaching the *Great Eastern*, and, passing beneath the larboard bow, the chain-cables of the “big ship” straining violently under the immense pressure of the flood-tide, we ranged alongside the large “accommodation ladder” which wound upwards to the deck. As we were placed, the deck of the tender was on a level with the “line of flotation” of the *Great Eastern*, this “line of flotation” being the level attained by the vessel when loaded, and which, in the present instance, was more than six feet above the water.

All this time the workmen were disembarking hastily and climbing up the numerous steps to the forepart of the ship, while I, with upturned head, like a tourist looking at a lofty building, was examining the paddles of the *Great Eastern*.

Viewed from the side, the wheels appeared slight and narrow, although the floats were more than twelve feet in length, but seen from the front they had a monumental appearance. Their neat fittings, the disposition of the solid nave, the starting-point of the whole arrangement, the inter-crossing supports, maintaining the triple felloes in position, this aureole of red spokes, half lost in the shade of the enormous paddle-box, all made a deep impression on the mind, and called up the idea of some gruesome and mysterious power.

With what force would those wooden paddle-boards, so strongly bolted together, beat the water which now gently flowed against them? What a seething of the waves would ensue as they were struck blow after blow by the powerful engine. What thunder would be engulfed in that cavern of the paddle-boxes when the *Great Eastern* went full speed impelled by those wheels which measured fifty-three feet in diameter and 166 feet in circumference, weighing ninety tons, and making eleven revolutions a minute!

The tender had now disembarked her passengers, so I ascended the grooved iron steps, and a few minutes afterwards I gained the fore-deck of the *Great Eastern*.

CHAPTER II.

THE deck seemed to be nothing but an immense dock-yard, given over to an army of workmen. I could scarcely realise the fact that I was on board a ship.

Thousands of men — artificers, sailors, engineers, officers, riggers, and spectators—were passing and re-passing, mingling together regardless one of another, some on the deck, some in the engine-rooms, others roaming the hurricane-decks or scattered in the rigging in a pell-mell manner that baffles all description. Here the “fly-wheel” cranes were raising enormous masses of cast-iron—there the steam-windlasses were hoisting heavy oaken beams. Over the engine-hatch an iron cylinder, a regular trunk of metal, was suspended. Forward the yards creaked as they were being squared along the top-masts, astern rose a scaffolding which no doubt concealed some still unfinished structure. Building, fitting, carpentering, rigging, and painting were going on in the midst of a most admired disorder.

My luggage having been put on board, I asked for Captain Anderson. He had not yet come off to the ship,

but one of the stewards undertook to show me my cabin, which was aft, and to send down my trunks.

"My friend," said I to the steward, "the *Great Eastern* is advertised to sail on the 20th March, but it is impossible to finish all the necessary work in four-and-twenty hours. Have you any idea when we shall leave Liverpool?"

But upon this point the steward was no better informed than myself, and he retired. I therefore resolved to inspect every hole and corner of this enormous ant-hill, and commenced my excursion like a tourist in a foreign land.

A black mud—that British compound which sticks to the pavements of English towns—covered the steamer's deck. Rivulets of unpleasant odour meandered here and there, and one might have fancied himself in one of the worst parts of Upper Thames Street, near London Bridge. I walked along by the deck-cabins, which extended to the stern of the vessel. Between them and the bulwarks on each side, a wide street or boulevard was thus formed, and very crowded these "streets" were. Making my way along I reached the centre of the ship, between the paddle-boxes, which were connected by a double system of "bridges."

Here was the opening of the pit occupied by the paddle-engines, and I was then able to see these wonderful machines. About fifty mechanics were distributed over the iron-grated sky-lights, some were employed upon the long piston-rods inclined at various angles, others

hanging to the cranks—the former adjusting the eccentrics—the latter riveting the crank-pins. The metal trunk that was being lowered slowly down the hatchway was a new driving-shaft for the paddle-wheels. From the depths below a continuous din uprose of harsh and discordant sounds.

Having glanced quickly over these preparations, I continued my walk to the bows. Here the upholsterers were completing the decoration of a good-sized deck-cabin, called the “smoking-room,” the real tap-room of this floating city; a magnificent *café*, lighted by fourteen windows, the ceiling white and gold, and wainscoted with panels in lemon-tree wood. Then crossing a small triangular space which formed the fore-deck, I reached the stem, which descends straight to the water.

Thence I retraced my steps, and could perceive, through the opening in the haze, the stern of the *Great Eastern* at a distance of more than 200 yards. This colossus necessitates the employment of such multiples to describe its dimensions!

I returned along the starboard “boulevard,” passing between the deck-cabins and the bulwarks, “dodging” the blows of swinging pulleys and of ropes, which the breeze swayed in all directions; at one time escaping from a moving “crane,” and further on flying from the burning sparks that showered from a forge-fire like a display of fireworks.

I could scarcely distinguish the mast-heads that, 200 feet high, were lost in the mist to which the tenders and

colliers kept adding their black smoke. Having again passed the paddle-engine hatch, I noticed a little hotel on the left, then the long lateral *façade* of a palace, surmounted by a terrace, the railings of which were being furbished. At length I reached the stern of the vessel, where the scaffolding which I have already noticed was erected. There, between the last cabin and the vast hatchways, above which rose the four steering-wheels, some mechanics had succeeded in fixing a steam-engine.

This machine consisted of two horizontal cylinders, and presented a system of pinions, levers, and cog-wheels, which appeared to me very complicated. I did not at first understand the object of it, but it seemed that here, as in all other parts of the ship, the preparations were very far from being completed.

And now, why these delays? Why so many new arrangements necessary on board the *Great Eastern*, a comparatively new ship? The reason must be briefly stated.

After making about twenty voyages between England and America, and of which one was marked by grave disaster, the running of the *Great Eastern* had been for a time discontinued. This immense vessel, specially designed for passenger traffic, seemed now useless, and put to shame by "outsiders."

When the first attempt to lay the transatlantic cable failed—a failure due partly to the incapacity of the ships which carried it—the engineers bethought themselves of the *Great Eastern*. She was the only vessel that could,

unassisted, take the wire cable—over 2,000 miles long, and weighing 4,500 tons. She was the only ship which, thanks to her indifference to the sea, could “pay out” and lay this immense cable. But to coil the cable in the hold special arrangements had to be made. They were obliged to take up two of the six boilers, and one of the three funnels belonging to the screw-engines. In their place vast tanks for the reception of the cable were fitted, for it was necessary to keep the cable covered with water, so as to preserve it from atmospheric changes. The coil thus was enabled to pass from the tank to the sea without coming in contact with the air.

The cable having been successfully laid, the *Great Eastern* was again relegated to a costly inactivity. Then came the International Exhibition of 1867, and a French company, called the “Société des Affréteurs du *Great Eastern*,” with limited liability and a capital of two millions of francs, was started with the intention to employ the immense vessel in a transatlantic passenger service. So thus the necessity arose for replacing the boilers, &c., and for enlarging the saloons, for the accommodation of many thousands of travellers, for the construction of extra deck cabins, containing supplementary dining-rooms, and finally to arrange 3,000 beds in this gigantic hull.

The *Great Eastern* was chartered at 25,000 francs a month. Two contracts were entered into with Messrs. G. Forrester and Co., of Liverpool, the first for the placing of new screw boilers, amounting to 538,750

francs; the second, for 662,500 francs, for general repairs, and the re-establishment on board.

Before entering upon these last restorations the Board of Trade ordered a thorough examination of the hull. This expensive operation concluded, a long crack in the broadside was carefully repaired at great expense, and then the fixing of the new boilers was proceeded with. They were also obliged to replace the driving-shaft of the paddle-wheels, which had been injured in the last trip. This shaft, with a crank in the centre to receive the connecting-rod of the air-pump, was replaced by a shaft furnished with two eccentrics, which assured the solidity of that important section of it which sustains the greatest strain. And at length, for the first time, the steering-apparatus was to be moved by steam.

It was for this delicate operation that the engineers were constructing the machine astern. The helmsman on the centre bridge, between the telegraphs to the paddle and screw engine-rooms, has immediately in front of him a dial-plate, furnished with a movable needle, which shows him the exact position of the rudder. To alter his course he has merely to touch a small wheel scarcely a foot in diameter, and placed vertically within easy reach. At the pressure the valves open; the steam from the boilers rushes through the tubes into the two cylinders of the little engine astern; the pistons move rapidly, the connections are set in motion, and the rudder instantly obeys the tension. If this system succeed, one man may steer the *Great Eastern* with his little finger!

For five days the preparations were continued with an all-absorbing activity. All this delay was very injurious to the promoters, but the contractors did their best. The date of departure was finally fixed for the 26th March. On the 25th the deck was still encumbered with all kinds of implements.

However, during that last day the gangways, the bridges, the hurricane-decks, were cleared by degrees ; the scaffoldings were dismantled, the cranes disappeared, the engines were adjusted, the last bolts were fixed, the last screws fastened, the polished portions were covered with a white coating, to preserve them from rusting during the voyage ; the oil reservoirs were filled, the last plate reposed at last on its metal mortise. The engineer-in-chief was to try the boilers that day. An enormous quantity of steam filled the engine-room, so that, leaning over the hatchway, enveloped in the warm mist, I could see nothing ; but I could hear the long pistons groaning in the stuffing-boxes, and the enormous cylinders oscillating upon their solid trunnions.

A thick foam soon appeared beneath the paddle-boxes as the wheels slowly churned the muddy water of the Mersey ; while astern the four-bladed screw beat the waves. The two engines, entirely independent of each other, were ready for service.

About 5 P.M. a steam-launch came alongside. She was destined for the *Great Eastern*. The movable engine was taken out, and hoisted on deck, by means of the windlass, but the launch herself could not be taken

aboard, as the davits to which they had attached it bent under the weight. This would not have happened had the boat been sustained by props. So it was determined to leave the steam-launch; but there still remained sixteen boats swinging to the davits.

That evening everything was practically ready. The "boulevards" were washed clean by an army of sweepers. The cargo was completely stowed. The victuals, the merchandise, and the coal filled the store-rooms, the hold, and the bunkers respectively. Nevertheless, the steamer was not yet sufficiently low in the water, and did not draw the regulated thirty feet. This was unfortunate as regarded the paddles, which, not being sufficiently immersed, were unable to work to their full power. However, it was possible to start at any rate, and I went to bed in the hope of going to sea next day. I was not disappointed. At daybreak on the 26th March I perceived the American flag at the fore, the French flag at the main, while the ensign of England floated from the peak.

CHAPTER III.

IN fact the *Great Eastern* was preparing to start. Volumes of black smoke were pouring from her five funnels. A hot steam was rising from the engine hatches. Some of the crew were cleansing the four large guns which were to salute the town of Liverpool as we dropped down stream. The top-men laid out upon the yards and made all snug, and hauled the "rattlins" "taut" between the shrouds. About eleven o'clock the upholsterers had finished their work, and then all embarked in the tender that awaited them alongside. As soon as there was sufficient pressure the steam was admitted to the cylinders of the steering-apparatus, and the engineers reported that this ingenious piece of mechanism worked well.

The weather was pretty fine. The sun broke out now and then between the heavy clouds which he was rapidly dispersing. Outside there was a strong breeze blowing, but that was nothing to the *Great Eastern*.

The officers were all on board and at their respective posts, in preparation for getting under weigh. The staff of officers consisted of the captain, first officer, two second

officers, five lieutenants, of whom one was a Frenchman, M. H——, and a volunteer, also French.

Captain Anderson is of high reputation in the British mercantile marine. To him is due the successful laying of the transatlantic cable.

It is true that if he succeeded where his predecessors had failed, it was that he worked under more favourable conditions, having the *Great Eastern* at his disposal. However that may be, his success gained for him the honour of knighthood bestowed upon him by the Queen herself. I found him a most agreeable commander. He was then of about fifty years of age, of a fair yet bronzed complexion—that fairness which maintains its colour in spite of the attacks of time or age. He was tall, had a large, good-tempered face, was self-possessed, and had a thoroughly English look. He walked quickly and at an even pace; his voice was pleasant; he had merry twinkling eyes; he never kept his hands in his pockets, but was always irreproachably gloved and well dressed; a corner of his white handkerchief peeped from the breast-pocket of his blue overcoat, decorated with a triple band of gold lace.

The first officer was a curious contrast to Captain Anderson. He is easy to describe. A little, active personage, very much sun-burnt, rather sunken eyes, face almost covered with beard and whiskers, his legs bowed in a manner calculated to defy any sudden lurches of the ship. An active, quick sailor, with his duty at his fingers' ends, he gave his orders in a decided tone, which

were repeated by the master with that utterance like the roaring of a lion afflicted with sore throat, which is peculiar to the British seaman. The first officer's name was W——. I believe he was an officer of the Royal Navy, attached, by special permission, to the *Great Eastern*. He seemed to have the appearance of a regular "Jack Tar," and might well have been a pupil of that old French admiral—a brave and proved sailor—who, at the moment of boarding, invariably called out to his men—"Come along, my lads, it is no use your hanging back, for you know I have a habit of blowing up my ships."

Besides the officers, there was a chief engineer and eight or ten assistant engineers, in charge of the engines. Under their orders there was a staff of 250 men, stokers, cleaners, &c., who scarcely ever quitted the engine-rooms, for, having ten boilers each with ten furnaces—that is, 100 fires to attend to—the engineer-staff had enough to occupy them night and day.

The ship's company proper—mates, quartermasters, topmen, steersmen, and boys—consisted of about 100 men; while there were besides 200 stewards told off to the service of the passengers.

Everyone was at his station. The pilot who was to take the *Great Eastern* out had come on board the evening before. I noticed also the French pilot from the island of Molène, near Ushant, who was obliged to cross with us from Liverpool to New York, and on the return voyage take the vessel into Brest.

"I begin to think that we shall really get away to-day," I said to Lieutenant H——.

"We are only waiting for our passengers now," he replied.

"Are there many?" said I.

"Twelve or thirteen hundred."

This was the population of a good-sized town!

At half-past eleven the tender was signalled, and she soon came alongside, crowded with passengers—her cabins, bridges, paddle-boxes, decks, and even the luggage, being made available as resting-places. Amongst this human freight, as I heard afterwards, were Californians, Canadians, Yankees, Peruvians, South Americans, English, Germans, and two or three Frenchmen.

The most distinguished of these were the celebrated Cyrus Field, of New York; the Honourable John Rose, of Canada; the Honourable Mr. M'Alpine, of New York; Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Cohen, of San Francisco; Mr. and Mrs. Whitney, of Montreal; Captain McPh—— and his wife. Amongst the French was the founder of the "*Société des Affréteurs du Great Eastern*," M. Jules D——, the representative of the Telegraph and Maintenance Company, who had subscribed a sum of £20,000 to the undertaking.

The tender came alongside the starboard-ladder, and then the interminable ascent of the passengers and their baggage commenced—not hurriedly or noisily, but like people coming quietly to their own houses. Some

Frenchmen ascended as if to take the ship by assault, and behaved like regular Zouaves.

The first care of every passenger, as soon as ever he gained the deck, was to descend to the saloon, and mark his seat at table. His card, or his name pencilled on a scrap of paper, was enough to secure his place. Besides, lunch was just being served, and in a few moments all the tables were surrounded by hungry passengers, who, although Anglo-Saxons, are perfectly well acquainted with the mode of keeping the *ennui* of a voyage at bay with a knife and fork.

I stayed on deck, noting the details of the embarkation.

At half-past twelve all the baggage was on board. There it was pell-mell—trunks of all sorts and sizes, from cases as large as waggons, big enough to contain the furniture of a house, down to little travelling trunks of elegant appearance; bags with obtrusive angles, and those English or American trunks so easily known by the grandeur of their straps, their many buckles, the shiny brass-work, the thick linen covers, upon which two or three large initials stand out upon metal plates.

All this litter was soon cleared away into the baggage-rooms—I was going to say in the hold 'tween decks—and the last workmen, porters, or guides, descended to the tender, which departed, leaving the broadside of the *Great Eastern* blackened with her smoke.

I was going "forward," when I suddenly encountered the young man I had caught sight of on the Prince's

Landing-stage. He stopped when he saw me, and held out his hand, which I shook warmly.

"Why, Fabian! you here?" I cried.

"My very self, my friend."

"I was not mistaken, then; it was you whom I noticed on the landing-stage a few days ago?"

"Very likely," replied Fabian; "but I did not see you."

"And you are going to America, eh?" said I.

"Certainly. I have got leave for a few months; and how could one spend it better than in running about the world?"

"It is a very fortunate chance that you elected to cross in the *Great Eastern* for this trip," said I.

"No chance in the matter, my dear friend," he replied. "I read in one of the papers that you had taken your passage in the *Great Eastern*, and as we had not met for a great many years, I have taken my berth on the *Great Eastern*, so as to make the passage with you."

"You have just come back from India, I suppose?"

"By the *Godavery*, which arrived at Liverpool the day before yesterday."

"And so, Fabian," I said, noticing his pale sad face, "you are travelling——"

"To divert my mind, if possible," replied Captain Fabian MacElwin, as, with visible emotion, he pressed my hand.

CHAPTER IV.

FABIAN left me to see after his berth in the grand saloon cabins, the number of which, "73," was marked upon his ticket. And now thick clouds of smoke went rolling from the funnels. One could hear the roar of the furnaces below. The steam went hissing through the escape-pipes and fell condensed into fine rain on the deck. Some swirling eddies betokened that the engines had made a move; steam was up, and we could now be off; but it was necessary to get up the anchor first. The tide was still flowing, and the *Great Eastern* was swinging to it. Everything was then in order to descend the river. Captain Anderson had chosen this time to get under weigh, for the great length of the vessel would not permit her to be turned in the Mersey. By not going out on the ebb, but, on the contrary, steadied by meeting the rapid flood-tide, Captain Anderson had greater command of the ship, and was more sure of working her amidst the numerous vessels encumbering the river; the least collision would be disastrous.

To weigh anchor under such conditions was a matter

of no little difficulty. The steamer, acted upon by the current, dragged at the chain-cables with great force, and besides, a violent sou'-wester took effect upon the massive hull and increased the tension of the cables. It was, therefore, necessary to employ powerful engines to tear the heavy anchors from their oozy bed. An anchor-boat, a vessel destined for this service, had stoppered on the chains, but its capstans were not sufficient, and the mechanical appliances which the *Great Eastern* had at her disposal were appealed to.

An engine of seventy horse-power was at the bows, and was made ready to pull up the anchors. By sending the steam through the cylinders a very considerable force was immediately obtained, which could be applied to the capstan to which the chains were wound. This was tried, but, powerful as it was, the machine was insufficient. Further assistance was, therefore, necessary. Captain Anderson ordered the capstan to be manned, and fifty men came forward to assist.

The anchors began to yield, but slowly, the cables "clanked," but with great labour, as they came through the hawse-holes, and, in my opinion, they might have eased the chains with a few turns of the paddle-wheels, so as to get them in more easily.

I was at this time upon the forecastle hurricane-deck with some of the passengers, watching all the details of the getting up anchor and the progress of the engine power. Close to me stood a passenger evidently impatient of the slow progress of the operation, who

frequently shrugged his shoulders, and gave vent incessantly to satirical jokes upon the powerless machine. He was a small thin man, nervous and feverish, whose eyes were scarcely perceptible beneath the long lids. A physiognomist would have said at once that life always presented itself in a comical way to this philosopher of the Democritus school, whose risible muscles were never at rest. On further acquaintance, as I found out later, he was a pleasant travelling companion.

"Monsieur," said he, "up to this time I have believed that machines were invented to assist men, and not men to assist machines."

I was about to reply to this observation, when a loud cry arose, and my companion and I were thrown towards the bows. Every man who had been working at the capstan had been knocked down. Some got up, while others lay stretched upon the deck. A pinion had given way, and the capstan had revolved with tremendous rapidity, impelled by the fearful tension of the cables. The sailors, taken aback, had been struck with terrible violence on the head and chest. The capstan-bars, now freed, flew like grape-shot in every direction, killing four sailors and wounding a dozen. Amongst the latter was the master, a Scot from Dundee.

We all rushed to the assistance of the sufferers. The wounded were taken to the "sick bay" astern, and preparations to send the four dead sailors ashore were at once made. Indeed, so lightly do Anglo-Saxons regard human life, that the death of these four men made very

little impression on board. These unfortunates, wounded or killed, were only the cogs of a wheel which could be easily replaced.

The tender was recalled, and she was again alongside in a few minutes.

I went towards the side, where the accommodation-ladder was still in its place. The four dead bodies, wrapped in sheets, were lowered and placed on the deck of the tender. One of the ship's surgeons also accompanied the tender to Liverpool, with orders to rejoin the *Great Eastern* as quickly as possible. The little vessel soon got away, and the sailors went forward to swab the decks, now stained with blood.

I ought to mention that one passenger, who had been slightly wounded by a capstan-bar, took advantage of the tender to return on shore. He had already had enough of the *Great Eastern*.

Meanwhile the little tug-boat was making for shore at full speed, and as I turned from watching it, my ironical acquaintance murmured behind me :

"A capital commencement this for a voyage !"

"A very bad one, I think," I replied. "To whom have I the honour to address myself?"

"To Doctor Dean Pitferge," he replied.

CHAPTER V.

THE operation of weighing anchor was now resumed with the assistance of the anchor-boat, the chains were eased off and the anchors were dragged from their tenacious hold. A quarter-past one sounded from the Birkenhead clocks ; the departure could be no longer postponed if they wished to take advantage of the tide to get the vessel out. The captain and the pilot ascended the bridge, one lieutenant took his station near the telegraph to the screw engine-room, and another near that communicating with the paddle-engines. The steersman was placed between them at the small wheel used for steering. For precaution's sake, and for fear of the failure of the steam steering-apparatus, four other men were in readiness astern to work the large "wheels" placed at the hatchway gratings. The *Great Eastern*, head to stream, had swung clear, and had only the flood tide to contend against while descending the river.

The order to start was given. The paddles beat the water slowly, the screw worked astern, and the enormous vessel began to move,

The greater part of the passengers were stationed forward on the hurricane-deck gazing at the banks of the river, bristling with the manufactory chimneys of Liverpool on the right—Birkenhead on the left.

The Mersey was crowded with vessels, some at anchor, others proceeding up or down stream, and only a very winding passage was open to the *Great Eastern*. But in the hands of the pilot, and obedient to the least movement of the rudder, she glided through the narrow channels like a whale-boat guided by the oar of a skilful coxswain. At one time I feared that we should run foul of a barque that had drifted across the current, and whose figure-head grazed the hull of the *Great Eastern*, but the collision was avoided; and when from the hurricane-deck I looked down upon this vessel, which I estimated at 700 or 800 tons burthen, it seemed like one of those toy-boats which children launch upon the lake in the Green Park or on the Serpentine.

The *Great Eastern* was soon opposite the Liverpool landing-stage, but the four cannon that were to have been fired as a salute were not used, out of respect for the dead, which the tender at that moment was disembarking. But tumultuous cheering took the place of the blank-cartridge, which is generally the last expression of national politeness. There was an immediate clapping of hands, and a waving of arms and a display of handkerchiefs with all that enthusiasm of which the English are so prodigal at the departure of any vessel, if only a yacht going forth on a simple cruise in the bay. But

with what shouting they were answered—what echoes they awoke on the quays! Thousands of spectators covered the banks on each side. Boats filled with spectators blackened the water. The sailors of the *Lord Clyde*—the guard-ship—moored near the docks, manned yards and gave us “three cheers.” From the poops of various ships at anchor arose discordant music, which even the cheers could not entirely drown. Flags were “dipped” incessantly in honour of the *Great Eastern*; but the shouting became more distant by degrees. We passed close to the *Tripoli*, a Cunard steamer, and which, notwithstanding her 2,000 tons, looked like a small barque beside us.

Then the houses on either side became less frequent. The smoke no longer obscured the landscape. The country trenched upon the brick walls. Some long uniform terraces, like workmen’s dwellings; later on villas cropped up, and from the left bank, from the platform of the lighthouse and the pier-head, some last cheers reached us.

At three o’clock the *Great Eastern* had cleared the Mersey, and got into St. George’s Channel. There was a stiff breeze blowing from the sou’-west. Our flags had not a crease in them as they blew out. The sea had already got up, but the steamer did not pitch or roll.

About four o’clock Captain Anderson hove to to wait for the tender, which was following us at full speed, to put the assistant on board again. When she came alongside a rope ladder was cast out, by which the surgeon

gained the deck, not without difficulty ; while the more agile pilot gained his gig, which awaited him, by the same means, each rower being provided with a cork jacket. He soon after reached the pretty little schooner which was lying to to leeward.

We then resumed our voyage. With the screw and paddles both at work our speed increased. Notwithstanding the head-wind, we neither rolled nor pitched. Darkness soon settled down upon the waters, and the Welsh coast, marked by the point of Holyhead, was at length lost in the gathering gloom of night

CHAPTER VI.

NEXT day, the 27th March, the *Great Eastern* ran along the varying and rocky coast of Ireland. I had chosen my cabin forward on the first tier. It was a small room, well lighted by two large ports. A second range of cabins separated it from the first saloon, so that neither the murmur of conversation nor the jingling of the pianos—which were not wanting—could penetrate it. It was an isolated cabin at the extremity of a suburb. A bed, a sofa, and a toilet-table included all the furniture of my room.

At seven o'clock in the morning I passed through the two saloons and reached the deck. Some passengers were already promenading the hurricane-deck. A gentle roll was perceptible, for the wind was blowing hard, but the sea, sheltered by the coast, was not very rough. Nevertheless, it argued well for the steadiness of the vessel.

From the roof of the smoking-room I could discern the long stretch of undulating coast-line, the verdure of the country having obtained for it the name of the

"Emerald Isle." A few scattered houses, a network of coast-guard tracks, a trail of white smoke that marked the passage of a train between two hills, an isolated semaphore gesticulating to ships in the offing, gave animation to the scene.

Between us and the coast the sea presented a dull-green appearance, like a plate spotted at intervals with sulphate of copper. The wind was still rising, and the spray was blown from the waves like dust. A number of vessels, brigs or schooners, lay waiting for the tide. Steamers, emitting black smoke, were soon outstripped by the *Great Eastern*, although she had not put forth any great speed.

We soon came in sight of Queenstown, a small harbour of refuge, outside which were a quantity of fishing-boats. Here all steamers or sailing vessels from America or the South, transatlantic or traders, call to land despatches and mails, whence an express train, always in readiness, carries them to Dublin in a few hours. There the mail-boat, a most powerful steamer, built for the service, takes the letters, and crosses the channel, at a rate of eighteen miles an hour, to Holyhead. The mails thus accelerated gain a whole day upon the most rapid transatlantic steamers.

About nine o'clock the *Great Eastern* hauled her course to the W.N.W. I descended to the deck, where I was joined by Captain MacElwin. He was accompanied by a friend, a man of six feet high, whose long moustache, lost in his whiskers, left the chin bare,

according to the fashion of that time. This fine young fellow was a type of an English officer. He held his head erect, without any stiffness; his glance was steady, his shoulders well thrown back, an easy yet firm step; in fact, he had all the appearance of a man of great moral courage—and I was not mistaken in my opinion.

“This is my friend Archibald Corsican,” said Fabian to me; “like myself, a captain in the Indian army.”

Thus introduced, Captain Corsican and I bowed.

“We did not see much of each other yesterday, my dear Fabian,” said I to Captain MacElwin, as I shook hands with him. “We were buried in the hurry of departure. I only know that your being on board was not an accident. I confess that if I count for anything in the decision you have taken——”

“Most certainly, my dear fellow,” replied Fabian. “Captain Corsican and I arrived in Liverpool quite intending to take our passage in the *China*, of the Cunard Line, when we heard that the *Great Eastern* was about to try her luck again between England and America. This was the opportunity. I learnt that you were on board; that is a pleasure. We had not met since our pleasant trip together to Norway and Sweden. I did not hesitate for a moment, and so it came to pass that we came off in the tender yesterday, where you saw us.”

“My dear Fabian,” I replied, “I do not think that either you or Captain Corsican will regret your decision. A passage across the Atlantic in this enormous ship

cannot fail to be very interesting, even to you, bad sailor as you are. It is a thing to be done. But now let us speak of yourself. Your last letter—and it is only six weeks since it reached me—had the Bombay postmark. I was quite under the impression that you were with your regiment.”

“We were, three weeks ago,” replied Fabian, “and leading that half-soldier, half-civilian life of officers in India. We hunted a great deal; my friend, here, is a famous tiger slayer, the terror of the jungles. However, being young and without encumbrance, we were inclined to give the tigers and other game a holiday, and come across to breathe a little European air. We managed to get leave for a year, and immediately started home to old England, overland, at express speed.”

“Old England!” said Captain Corsican, smiling; “we are there no longer, Fabian. It is an English ship that carries us, certainly; but the owners are a French company, and it is taking us to America. Three different flags are floating overhead, and proves that we are walking on Franco-Anglo-American decks.”

“What does it matter?” replied Fabian, whose brow contracted for a moment, as if with pain. “What does it matter, so long as we spend our leave? We must move about; it is life to us. It is so good to forget the past, and to kill the present, by changing our surroundings. In a few days we shall be in New York, where I shall meet my sister and her children, whom I have not met for years. Then we shall go and see the great lakes,

descend the Mississippi to New Orleans, go and have a little shooting on the Amazon. From America we shall cross to Africa, where lions and elephants will doubtless meet us at the Cape to celebrate the arrival of Captain Corsican, and thence we shall return amongst the Sepoys again, and impose upon them the enlightenment of the metropolis."

Fabian spoke with a nervous volubility, and he sighed frequently. He had evidently something on his mind of which I knew nothing, and which even his letters had not hinted at. Archibald Corsican, however, appeared to know all about it. He displayed a lively friendship for MacElwin, who was his junior by some years. He seemed like an elder brother of Fabian's, and his devotion at times amounted even to heroism.

Just then our conversation was interrupted. A horn was sounded. This was the rosy-cheeked steward's way of announcing luncheon at half-past twelve. Four times a day, to the great satisfaction of the passengers, this instrument was sounded. At half-past eight for breakfast, half-past twelve for lunch, four o'clock for dinner, and at half-past seven for tea. In a few moments the long deck promenades were deserted, and the guests were very soon seated at table in the large saloon, where I placed myself near Captain Corsican and Fabian.

Four rows of tables were laid in the dining-saloons; above them the glasses and bottles, placed in the swing-racks, were protected from the motion of the vessel, and kept the perpendicular. The ship experienced no rolling

yet. The passengers, men, women, and children were enabled to enjoy their luncheon. Well-dressed dishes were handed round. A number of stewards waited on us. According to order, as per a little wine-carte, they supplied wine, liqueurs, or beer, which were separate items of account. The Californians, above all, distinguished themselves by their taste for champagne.

At this luncheon, sitting beside her husband, an old custom-house officer, was a washerwoman, enriched by the washing-tubs of San Francisco, who drank Cliquot, at 12s. a bottle! Two or three young ladies—pale and delicate misses—were eating underdone beef; old maids, with projecting teeth, mixed an egg with their small glasses of brandy. Others devoured, with great *gusto*, the rhubarb tarts and celery. Everyone ate with the intention of having a good time, and one could almost believe oneself in a Paris restaurant, and not out in the open sea.

Luncheon over, the decks were again peopled with various groups. The passengers saluted each other as if they were promenading in Hyde Park. Children ran about playing, bowling their hoops, and throwing balls about as if they were in the gardens of the Tuileries. The majority of the men smoked as they walked up and down. The ladies, seated upon deck-chairs, worked, read, or chatted. The governesses and nurses looked after the babies. Some stout Yankees kept balancing themselves in their rocking-chairs. The officers passed to and fro; some keeping their watch on the bridge,

observing the compasses, others replying to the frequent, and occasionally ridiculous, questions of the passengers. Through the noise caused by the wind I could hear the notes of the organ in the stern cabin, as well as the jingling of two or three of Pleydel's pianos, which made a deplorable discord down below.

About three o'clock we heard loud cheering. The passengers crowded the upper decks. The *Great Eastern* had come within two cables' length of a steamer, which she had overhauled hand over hand. This ship was the *Propontis*, bound for New York, which saluted the big ship as she passed, and the big ship returned the salute in due course.

At half-past four the land was still in sight; we were about three miles distant, but we could not distinguish the coast very clearly, owing to the thin mist that had suddenly sprung up. We soon perceived a light. This was the gleam of the Fastnet lighthouse, placed upon an isolated rock. Night was now rapidly closing in, during which we should have to round Cape Clear, the most south-westerly point of the Irish coast.

CHAPTER VII.

I HAVE already stated that the *Great Eastern* is more than 600 feet long. For the satisfaction of those fond of comparisons, I will add that it is a third longer than the Pont des Arts. She could not, therefore, be worked in the Seine. Besides, looking at her draught of water, she could no more float in that river than could the bridge itself. To be accurate, the *Great Eastern* measures $207\frac{1}{2}$ metres, or 673 feet, at the line of flotation between perpendiculars. She is $210\frac{1}{4}$ metres across the upper deck; that is to say, double that of the largest transatlantic steamers. The breadth is 25.30 metres amidships, and 36.65 metres over the paddle-boxes.

The hull of the *Great Eastern* is proof against the largest waves. She is double-skinned, and made up of a number of cells between these skins, which are nearly three feet high. Besides these, there are thirteen compartments, separated by water-tight bulkheads, increasing the chances of the vessel in case of a leak or fire. Ten thousand tons of iron were used in the construction of the hull, and three millions of rivets, driven in heated, secure the perfect fixing of the plates.

The displacement of the *Great Eastern* is 28,500 tons, when it draws thirty feet of water ; when unloaded, she draws only about twenty feet. She has accommodation for 10,000 passengers. Out of the 373 chief places in France, therefore, 274 are more thinly populated than this floating town, when carrying her full complement of passengers.

The lines of the *Great Eastern* are very long. Her straight bows are pierced with hawse-holes, by which the anchor-chains are hauled up. No figure-head adorns the bows ; the stern falls away in some degree, and rather detracts from the general appearance.

Six masts and five funnels rise above the deck. The three foremost are the "foregiggers," the foremast (both really foremasts) and the mainmast. The three others are designated the "after" mainmast, the mizzen, and the aft "gigger." The fore and mainmasts are square rigged, carrying topsails and topgallantsails. The other masts were only rigged with "fore-and-aft" sails ; the total spread being nearly 5,500 square yards of canvas, made in the Royal factory at Edinburgh. In the spacious "tops" of the second and third masts, a company of soldiers could be easily paraded. Of the six masts, supported by shrouds and stays, the second, third, and fourth are of iron, and of splendid workmanship. They measure forty inches in diameter, and the mainmast is 207 French feet in height, which exceeds the elevation of the towers of Notre Dame. Of the five chimneys, the two forward funnels appertain to the paddle-engine

furnaces, the three others to the screw. These are enormous cylinders, more than ninety feet high, and fastened by chains let into the decks.

The arrangements of the interior fittings of the *Great Eastern* are excellent. The laundries and the quarters of the ship's company are in the forecastle. More abaft is a ladies' cabin and a grand saloon decorated with lustres, swinging-lamps, and paintings. These beautiful rooms are lighted by side windows supported upon elegant gilded *colonettes*, and communicate with the decks by a wide staircase, with metal steps and mahogany balusters. On the deck are placed four rows of cabins, separated by passages, some communicating by a landing, others, a stage lower, are reached by a special staircase. Still further astern are three immense dining-rooms, arranged in the same manner as the cabins. To reach the stern cabins from the bows one must traverse a passage round the paddle-engines, between the bulkheads and the ship's offices.

The engines of the *Great Eastern* are justly considered as masterpieces of construction—I had almost said of clockwork. It is most astonishing to see the ponderous machinery working with all the ease and smoothness of a watch. The nominal power of the paddle-engine is 1,000 horse-power. It is composed of four oscillating cylinders of a diameter of seven feet, coupled in pairs, and having a stroke of thirteen feet by direct-acting pistons. The average pressure of steam is twenty pounds to the inch, or about an atmosphere and two-thirds. The heating

surface of the whole four boilers is 790 square yards. This paddle-engine works in a majestic manner, the eccentric rising over the driving shaft like a balloon. It can give to the wheels twelve revolutions a minute, and in this respect contrasts with the screw, which is more rapid and "fussy," and works at 1,600 horse-power.

The screw-engine is composed of four fixed horizontal cylinders placed two by two, and the pistons, with a stroke of $3\frac{1}{4}$ feet, work directly upon the screw shaft. Under the pressure of the six boilers, whose heating surface is nearly 1,200 square yards, the screw, weighing sixty tons, can work up to forty-eight revolutions a minute, but at that rate panting, and at full pressure, the engine whirls round madly, and the long cylinders appeared to be attacking something with the blows of the pistons, like enormous boars defending themselves with their tusks.

Independently of these two great engines, the *Great Eastern* also possesses six other auxiliary machines for supply purposes, ship's use, and for the capstans; so steam, as will be perceived, plays a very important part on board in all the workings.

Such is the unrivalled and well-known vessel. But well known as she was, a French captain, nevertheless, made the following entry in his log:

"Met a ship with six masts and five funnels. Supposed the *Great Eastern*!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE weather became very bad on Wednesday night. I was very much knocked about, and was obliged to press myself tightly against the sides of my berth to keep my position. Bags and trunks darted about my cabin. An extraordinary tumult filled the neighbouring saloon, where two or three hundred trunks had been temporarily placed; they went rolling one over the other, banging against the furniture. The doors slammed, the decks creaked, the partitions groaned in that manner peculiar to sappy wood, the glasses and bottles jingled in their hanging racks, and avalanches of plates and dishes crashed upon the floor. I could hear the irregular beating of the screw and the paddles, which, alternately lifted out of the water, beat the air in rapid revolutions. From all these circumstances I concluded that the wind had got up, and that the steamer was not so indifferent to the ocean waves when they came broadside on.

At six o'clock A.M., after a sleepless night, I got up. By holding tightly with one hand I managed to dress

after a fashion. But without any fixed support, I could not stand up, and I had a serious struggle with my overcoat before I could persuade it to go on. At length I got out of my cabin and crossed the saloon, holding on as tightly as possible in the midst of the surging luggage. I ascended the staircase on my knees, like a Roman peasant climbing the Santa Scala of Pontius Pilate, and at last gained the deck, where I lashed myself tightly to a belaying-pin.

There was no land visible. We had passed Cape Clear during the night. Around us was a vast circumference formed by the horizon where sky and sea appeared to touch. The dull leaden sea rolled in long waves around us, but did not break at all. The *Great Eastern* receiving them abeam, and not carrying any sail to steady her, rolled fearfully. Her masts described great circles against the sky like gigantic compasses. The pitching motion was scarcely perceptible, but the rolling was awful. It was impossible to stand upright. The officer of the watch was lashed to the bridge, and looked as if he were balanced in a "swing."

From cleat to cleat I made my cautious way to the starboard paddle-box. The deck, damp with mist, was very slippery. I was about to lash myself to a stanchion of the bridge when a body came rolling to my feet.

The body was Doctor Dean Pitferge! My "original" friend raised himself to a kneeling posture, and looking up he said:

"It is really so. The arc described by the sides of the

Great Eastern is 40 degrees ; that is to say, 20 degrees below the horizontal and 20 above."

"Indeed !" I replied, laughing, not so much at the observation, as at the conditions under which it was made.

"Fact !" replied the doctor. "During the oscillation the rate of the declension of the sides is 59 inches in a second. A transatlantic steamer only half as large as this would only take that time to roll."

"Then," I said, "as the *Great Eastern* recovers her perpendicular so quickly, she must have more stability."

"For herself, yes, but not for her passengers," replied Dean Pitferge, gaily ; "for you see they come to the horizontal more quickly than they wish."

Delighted with this repartee the doctor got on his feet, and by assisting each other we were able to gain one of the seats on the poop. Dean Pitferge had escaped with only a few bruises, and I congratulated him, for he might have fractured his skull.

"Oh ! we have not done with this yet," he said, "and before long some trouble will overtake us."

"Overtake us !"

"The steamer, and consequently you and me, and all the rest of the passengers."

"If you mean what you say," I replied, "I wonder you took passage in this ship."

"I came to see what would happen. I have no particular objection to shipwreck," replied the doctor, looking at me in a knowing manner.

"Is this the first time you have sailed in the *Great Eastern*?" I asked.

"No ; I have already made several passages in her out of curiosity."

"Then you should not complain," said I.

"I do not complain at all ; I merely state facts, and patiently await the hour when the catastrophe will take place."

Was the doctor amusing himself at my expense? I did not know what to think. His little eyes wore a very ironical expression. I thought I would push him further.

"Doctor," I said, "I do not know on what facts you rely to prove your unpleasant prognostications, but allow me to remind you that the *Great Eastern* has already crossed the Atlantic twenty times, and every one of those passages has been satisfactory."

"That has nothing to do with it," replied Pitferge ; "this ship has been bewitched, to use a common term, and she cannot escape her destiny. People know it and have no confidence in her. Do you remember what difficulties the engineers had in launching her. She did not want to take the water except to Greenwich Hospital ! I believe that Brunel, her designer, 'died in consequence of the operation,' as we say in the schools."

"Aha, Doctor !" I cried, "you are a bit of a materialist, then ?"

"Why do you ask ?"

"Because I have remarked that many people who

do not believe in God believe in everything else, even in an 'evil eye.'"

"You can joke at your leisure, sir," replied the doctor; "but permit me to finish. The *Great Eastern* has ruined many companies. Originally built for the transport of emigrants and merchandise to Australia, Australia is the very place she has not been to. With combined engines to yield a speed superior to the mail-boats, she is inferior——"

"From this," I said, "it is to be concluded——"

"Wait," replied the doctor. "One of the commanders of the *Great Eastern* has been drowned already, and he was one of the most able, for, by keeping his vessel a little ahead of the waves, he knew how to stop this terrible rolling."

"Well," said I, "we can only regret the death of such a skilful officer, that's all."

"Then," continued Dean Pitferge, without heeding my incredulity, "people tell curious tales about this vessel; they say that a passenger lost his way somewhere below, like a pioneer in an American forest, and has never again been found."

"Ah," I exclaimed, ironically, "there is a fact for you!"

"They also say," replied the doctor, "that during the construction of the boilers, a mechanic was welded, by mistake, into the steam-chest!"

"Bravo!" I cried; "the soldered mechanic. *E ben trovato*. You believe that, of course, doctor?"

"I believe," replied Pitferge, seriously, "that our voyage has commenced badly, and will end disastrously."

"But the *Great Eastern* is a solidly-built vessel," I answered, "and of a construction fitted to resist like a solid block, and to defy the most furious sea."

"No doubt she is solid," replied the doctor, "but once let her fall into the trough of the sea, and see whether she will recover herself. She is a giant undoubtedly, but her strength is not in proportion to her size. Her engines are not strong enough. Have you had any account of her nineteenth passage between Liverpool and New York?"

"No, doctor."

"Well, I was on board. We left Liverpool on Tuesday, 10th December. We had a number of passengers, and all confident in the ship. Everything went well so long as we were sheltered by the Irish coast. No rolling, no sickness. Next day the same. The passengers were charmed. Towards the morning of the 12th, however, the wind freshened. The Atlantic waves took us abeam, and the *Great Eastern* began to roll heavily. All the passengers disappeared from the decks. At four o'clock it was blowing a gale. The furniture was thrown about, one of the looking-glasses in the saloon was broken by contact with the head of your humble servant. All the crockery was smashed, there was a fearful row. Eight boats were swept from the davits by a sea. At that time our position was critical. The paddles had to be stopped. An immense piece of lead

having become detached by the rolling, now threatened to fall into the engines. However, the screw was still working. The paddles soon resumed at half-speed, but one of them had been injured during the stoppage, and the spokes and floats now grazed the hull. So the paddles were again obliged to be stopped, and we had the screw alone to assist us, to lie to. The night was fearful. The storm redoubled its fury. The *Great Eastern* fell into the trough of the sea, and could not right herself. At daybreak nothing but the ironwork remained of the paddle-wheels. We spread some canvas to work the ship and put her head to sea, but the sails were at once blown away. Confusion reigned supreme. The chain-cables getting free from their racks rolled from side to side of the ship. A cattle-pen was demolished, and a cow fell into the ladies' saloon down the hatchway.

"A new misfortune befell us in the snapping of the rudder-chain, so we could no longer steer. Fearful shocks were heard. An oil-tank that weighed three tons broke loose, and sweeping across the 'tween-decks, struck the sides alternately as if it would break open the hull. Saturday passed in the midst of universal terror. We were still in the trough of the sea. On Sunday the wind began to moderate, and an American engineer on board succeeded in getting the rudder-chains fastened. We bore up little by little, the immense *Great Eastern* put her head to the sea, and eight days after leaving Liverpool we entered Queenstown harbour. Now, sir, who can tell where *we* shall be in eight days!"

CHAPTER IX.

IT must be confessed that Doctor Dean Pitferge was not very reassuring. None of the passengers would have heard him without a thrill of apprehension. Was he speaking seriously, or merely joking? Was it true that he took his passage by the *Great Eastern* on all her voyages, so as to be "in at the death?" Anything is possible for an eccentric person, particularly if that person be an Englishman!

Meanwhile, the steamer kept her course, but rolling like a ship's boat. She followed strictly the loxodromic line of steamers. As is well known, on a plane surface the shortest way from one point to another is by following a straight line. Upon a sphere the most direct way is by following the curved line made by the circumference of circles round it. Vessels desirous to shorten the voyage follow the latter course. But sailing vessels cannot keep to it when the wind is contrary. Only steamers are masters of this direct route, and they take the direction of the great circles. That is what the *Great Eastern* was doing by steering a little to the nor'-west.

The rolling continued. Sea-sickness, at the same time contagious and epidemic, made rapid progress.

Some of the passengers, livid, pale, with pinched features and indented brows, even remained on deck for the sake of the fresh air. They were for the most part furious against the unfortunate steamer, which was conducting itself like a veritable buoy, and were swearing at the "Société des Affréteurs," whose prospectus announced that "sea-sickness was unknown on board."

About 9 A.M. an object was signalled three or four miles away on the larboard bow. Was it a wreck, a whale, or the hull of a derelict vessel. We could not yet distinguish. A group of the passengers, now convalescent, assembled on the forecastle observing the waif, which was floating 300 miles from the nearest land.

Meanwhile, the *Great Eastern* steered towards the object. Telescopes and opera-glasses were all directed towards it. Conjecture was rife, and between the Americans and the English, who are always ready for a bet, some wagers were laid. Amongst these excited gamblers I noticed a tall man, whose countenance bore unequivocal signs of duplicity. This individual had a look of general hatred stamped upon his features, which no phrenologist or physiologist could mistake. His forehead was marked with a vertical furrow, his look was at the same time bold and shifting; his eye was cold, the brows very nearly met; he was high-shouldered, and his head was thrown back. In fine, he had all the appearance of rare impudence joined to rare knavishness.

Who this man was I did not know, but he moved me strangely. He spoke loudly and in a tone almost conveying insult. Some associates worthy of him kept laughing at his jokes, which were in very bad taste. He pretended to recognise in the derelict the carcase of a whale, and he made heavy bets upon it, which found ready takers.

These bets, which amounted to several hundred dollars, he eventually lost, for the object turned out to be the hull of a vessel. The steamer was approaching it rapidly. We could already distinguish the copper on the keel. She had had three masts, and was about 600 tons burthen. Her masts had been cut away. She was heeling over very much, and the severed rigging was still hanging loose.

Had this ship been abandoned by her crew? That was the question; or, rather, as the English term was, the "great attraction" of the moment. We could not perceive anyone on board—perhaps the crew had taken refuge below. Gazing steadily through my glasses, I could distinguish some object moving in the bows, but as we drew nearer I found it was only a fragment of the jib fluttering in the wind.

At the distance of half a mile all the details became apparent. The hull appeared new and in excellent preservation, the cargo had shifted during the storm, and had given her a "list" to starboard. Taken aback at a critical moment, the vessel had been obliged to sacrifice her masts.

The *Great Eastern* continued to approach, and then sailed round the apparently deserted vessel, blowing her whistle frequently with piercing blasts, but no sign came from the derelict. Nothing could be distinguished over all the waste of waters—no boat was in sight.

The crew had evidently had time to abandon her, but how could they ever gain land, now 300 miles away? Their boats could never live in a sea which rolled the *Great Eastern* about so terribly! When could the catastrophe have happened? In such a wind must we not seek far in the west for the scene of the shipwreck, as the hull must have been driven for miles by such a wind and sea? These questions were destined to remain for ever unanswered.

As the *Great Eastern* passed astern of the hull, I distinctly read the name *Lerida*, but the port to which she belonged was not stated. By her build and "lines" the sailors on board the steamer pronounced her an American barque.

A man-of-war or a merchant vessel would not have hesitated to put a few hands on board of her, for she undoubtedly carried a valuable cargo. In such cases of salvage one-third of the value goes to the salvors. But the *Great Eastern*, engaged on regular service, could not take this hull in tow for so many thousand miles. To return with her would be equally impossible, so, to the great disgust of the crew, she was left to her fate, and had soon sunk below the horizon. The group of passengers dispersed. Some went to the saloons, others to their cabins, and

even the lunch-horn failed to rouse those who lay in the clutches of sea-sickness.

Towards mid-day Captain Anderson set the two fore-sails and the try-sail, which steadied the ship. The sailors also attempted to hoist the brigantine on a new system. But the system was too new, no doubt, for they could not put it in practice, and the sail was not hoisted all the voyage.

CHAPTER X.

NOTWITHSTANDING the disorderly behaviour of the *Great Eastern* herself, the passengers were rapidly becoming organised. With Anglo-Saxons nothing is easier. The steamer is his district, his street, his house, which he brings with him—he is at home. The Frenchman, on the contrary, has always the appearance of a traveller, when he is travelling.

When the weather was fine the decks were thronged with promenaders, and all those who managed to keep on their feet appeared to be tipsy men, amongst whom intoxication had produced the same effects at the same time. When not on the deck, the passengers remained either in their own rooms or in the saloon. Then arose the discordant music of the pianos. However, I must say that these instruments—very rough indeed, like the sea—gave no opening for talent to exercise itself. The bass failed when the vessel lurched to larboard, and the treble notes when the return roll took place. But all these holes in the melody and gaps in the harmony scarcely affected the Saxon ear.

Amid all these *virtuosi* I noticed a very tall, bony woman, who ought to have been a good musician, for, in order to read the piece she was playing, she had marked every note with a number, and the corresponding keys likewise ; so that if the note in the book were 27, she struck key 27, or if note 53, she played note 53 on the piano ; and all this with a perfect indifference to the uproar around her, to the other pianos in neighbouring saloons, and even to the children who came and thumped upon the unoccupied keys of her piano. During this concert the audience took up books here and there from the tables, and if one of the passengers chanced to hit on an interesting bit, he would read it aloud to his neighbours, who would listen courteously, and applaud him when he had finished. Some newspapers were scattered upon the sofas, chiefly English and American, which always look old, although they have not been cut. It is a most unpleasant operation to open one of these immense sheets, which take up a square yard or two of space ; but as it is the fashion not to cut them, they remain uncut. One day I had the patience to read the *New York Herald*, under these conditions, nearly to the end. You can judge whether I was recompensed for my trouble when in the column "Private," I read—"M. X. begs that the beautiful Miss Z——, whom he met yesterday in an omnibus in Twenty-fifth Street, will call to-morrow at his rooms, No. 17, St. Nicholas Hotel, as he wishes to speak to her of marriage." What did the beautiful Miss Z—— do ? I do not even want to know.

I passed all the time after dinner in the grand saloon, observing what passed, and chatting. The conversation could not fail to be interesting, for my friend, Dean Pitferge, came and sat beside me.

"Have you recovered from your fall?" I asked.

"Quite," he replied; "but it is no go."

"What is no go? Yourself?"

"No; the steamer. The boilers and the screw are working very badly; we cannot get sufficient pressure."

"You must be very anxious to get to New York," I said.

"Not at all. I am speaking as an engineer; that's all. I am very comfortable here, and shall regret sincerely to part from the collection of originals that fate has brought together on board to amuse me."

"Originals, you say!" I exclaimed, as I looked at the passengers who filled the saloon. "But all these people appear very much alike."

"Bah!" exclaimed the doctor. "It is evident you have not noticed them. The species is the same, I confess, but what a number of varieties in that species! Now just look at that careless group of men over there, with their legs on the sofas, and their hats screwed on as it were. They are Yankees—pure Yankees from the little States of Maine, Vermont, or Connecticut—produce of New England; men of intelligence and energy, a little too much influenced by the reverends, but who have the habit of *not* putting their hands before their mouths when they sneeze! Ah! my dear sir, they are true Saxons, with

a taste for bargaining, and clever at it too. Just shut two Yankees up in a room, and at the end of an hour each will have made ten dollars off the other !”

“Well, I will not ask how they do it,” I replied, laughing ; “but amongst them I perceive a little man with his nose in the air, something like a weathercock ; he is dressed in a long coat and rather short trousers ; who is that gentleman ?”

“That is the Protestant minister, a ‘considerable’ man in Massachusetts. He is going to rejoin his wife, an ex-governess, rather advantageously compromised in a celebrated trial.”

“And that other, a big melancholy man, who appears to be absorbed in his calculations.”

“He is calculating,” said the doctor. “He is for ever making calculations.”

“Solving problems ?”

“No, what he is worth. He is also a ‘considerable’ man. He always knows to a cent of what he is possessed. He is rich. About a quarter of the city of New York is built upon his land. Fifteen minutes since he had 1,625,367 dollars 50 cents, but at this moment he has only 1,625,367 dollars 25 cents.”

“But what has made that difference in his capital ?”

“He has just smoked a quarter-dollar cigar,” replied Pitferge.

Doctor Dean Pitferge amused me so much by his quaint replies that I urged him still. He pleased me.

I pointed out another group settled down in a corner of the saloon.

"Those?" he said. "They are from the far West. The biggest of them, who looks like a head-clerk, is a 'considerable' man, the governor of the Bank of Chicago. He always carries an album under his arm, containing the principal views of his well-beloved city. He is proud of it, and justly so; a town founded in a desert in the year 1836, can now boast a population of more than 400,000. Close to him you may perceive a Californian couple. The young wife is lady-like and charming. The husband, now a polished gentleman, was formerly a plough-boy; one fine day he ploughed up a nugget. He——"

"Is a 'considerable' man," I suggested.

"Certainly he is," replied the doctor. "He can reckon his assets by millions."

"And that tall individual who keeps nodding his head like a clockwork figure?"

"That," replied Pitferge, "is the celebrated Cockburn of Rochester, the world-known statistician, who has weighed, measured, proportioned, and calculated everything in the world. Interrogate this harmless lunatic, and he will tell you how much bread a man fifty years old has eaten in his lifetime, and the number of cubic metres of air he has respired. He will tell you how many volumes quarto can contain the speeches of an advocate in the Temple, and how many miles a postman walks daily carrying only love-letters. He will tell you the number of widows who

cross London Bridge in a given hour, and the height of a pyramid constructed of the sandwiches consumed by the citizens of the United States in a year. He will tell you——”

The doctor, now in full swing of his discourse, would have continued for some time longer in this strain, had not other passengers been attracted by his novel remarks. What a number of different types there were in that crowd! Nevertheless, there was no idler amongst them; for one does not go from one continent to another without some serious motive. The greater number, no doubt, were going to seek their fortunes on American soil; forgetting that at the age of twenty a Yankee has gained his position, and at twenty-five he is too old to enter the lists.

Amongst these adventurers, these inventors, these chance-seekers, Dean Pitferge pointed out some who could not fail to be interesting. One, a chemist, a rival of Dr. Liebig, was supposed to have discovered the mode of condensing all the nutritive elements of beef in a tablet of meat the size of a five-franc piece; and he was on his way to press money out of the bullocks of the Pampas. Another person, the inventor of some portable locomotive power—a steam-horse in a watch-case—was on his way to exhibit the patent in New England. Another, a Frenchman from the Rue Chapon, was carrying over 30,000 pasteboard dolls, which said “Papa” with a real American accent; and he had no doubt that his fortune was already assured.

Besides these originals, what a number of others there were whose secrets we could not guess! Perhaps amongst them some cashier was escaping from his rifled cash-box, and some detective, his "friend" for the nonce, was only awaiting the arrival of the *Great Eastern* at New York to make him a prisoner. Perhaps, also, we might have discovered in the crowd some of those promoters who are always so fortunate in getting credulous shareholders, even for the "Oceanic Company for lighting Polynesia with Gas," or "The Universal Incombustible Coal Society."

But just then my attention was diverted by the entrance of a young married couple, who seemed to be suffering from extreme listlessness.

"They are Peruvians, my dear sir," said the doctor, "and married about a year ago, and have been on their honeymoon tour round the world. They left Lima the night they were married. They adored each other in Japan, loved in Australia, tolerated each other in France, quarrelled in England, and will most likely separate in America."

"Now, who is that tall and somewhat haughty-looking person, coming in?" I asked. "If I might judge from his black moustache, I should say he was an officer."

"He is a Mormon," replied Pitferge; "an elder, named Hatch, a great preacher in the City of the Saints. he is a fine type of man. Look at his proud eye, and his dignified countenance, so different from the Yankees. Mr. Hatch is returning to America from Germany and

England, where he has been preaching Mormonism with success, for the sect has many adherents in Europe, who are permitted to conform to the laws of their respective countries."

"But," I said, "I thought that polygamy was forbidden in Europe."

"So it is, my dear sir ; but polygamy is not incumbent upon Mormons. Brigham Young has many wives because it suits him, but all his disciples do not follow his example, even on the borders of Salt Lake."

"Indeed !" said I, "and Mr. Hatch."

"Mr. Hatch has only one wife, and he finds that she is quite enough. However, he proposes to explain to us the system at a lecture some evening."

"The saloon will be crowded," I said.

"Yes," replied Pitferge, "if gambling do not draw away too many of the audience. You know that they do play in the cabin forward. There is an Englishman there of very 'bad form,' who appears to rule the little world of gamblers. He is a notorious man, his reputation is detestable. Have you noticed the fellow I mean ?"

Some further details, added by the doctor, convinced me that it was the same individual who, that morning, had made himself conspicuous by his headlong betting respecting the derelict. I was right in my conjecture. His name, Dean Pitferge told me, was Harry Drake. He was the son of a Calcutta merchant—a gambler, a rake, and a duellist ; almost ruined, and, probably,

now on his way to America to seek a life of adventure.

"These sort of people," added the doctor, "always find sycophants to flatter them, and, you see, that he has already made himself the centre of a circle of scamps. Amongst them I have remarked a short, stout man, with a prominent nose and thick lips: he wears eye-glasses, and looks like a German Jew run to seed. He gives himself out as a doctor, *en route* for Quebec, but I think he is a low comic actor, and a great admirer of Drake."

At that moment Dean Pitferge, who easily passed from one subject to another, touched my elbow. I looked towards the door of the saloon. A young man of about eight-and-twenty, and a girl of about seventeen, entered arm-in-arm.

"A newly-married couple?" I said.

"No," replied the doctor, in a sympathetic tone, "they are only engaged, and waiting to get to New York to be married. They have just been travelling in Europe, with the parents' permission, of course, and now they know that they will suit each other. Brave young people, it is a pleasure to look at them. I often see them leaning over the engine-hatch, counting the revolutions of the wheels, which do not turn fast enough to please them. Ah, monsieur, if the boilers were heated to the intensity of those two young hearts, at what a pace we should travel, to be sure!"

CHAPTER XI.

THAT day, at half-past twelve, a quartermaster affixed to the door of the grand saloon the following notice :

Lat. $51^{\circ} 15'$ N.
Long. $18^{\circ} 13'$ W.
Dist. Fastnet 323 miles.

which signified that at noon we were 323 miles from the Fastnet light, the last we had seen on the coast of Ireland, in $51^{\circ} 51'$ north latitude, and $18^{\circ} 13'$ west longitude of the meridian of Greenwich. The captain took his bearings thus every day and made it known to the passengers. So by consulting the notice one could trace the ship's course on the map. Up to that day the *Great Eastern* had only made 323 miles in six-and-thirty hours. This was not at all satisfactory, as a steamer of any pretensions can always traverse 300 miles in twenty-four hours.

Having left the doctor I passed the rest of the day with Fabian. We went to the stern gallery of the vessel, which Pitferge called walking in the fields. There, isolated and leaning over the taffrail, we watched the immense expanse of sea ; a strong briny odour rose

up from the waves, while small rainbows, caused by the refracted rays, played across the foaming "wake." The screw was revolving rapidly forty feet below us, and when it emerged it beat the waves with still greater fury, while the copper sparkled in the sunlight. The ocean appeared to be a vast conglomeration of emerald. The creamy "wake" extended as far behind us as we could see, the foam thrown up by the paddles and the screw being mingled in one milky track. This whiteness, on which distinct patterns were traced, seemed like an immense veil of point-lace upon the deep blue sea, and the gulls threw rapid shadows over the water as they flew around.

Fabian kept looking at all this magic of the sea without speaking. What did he see in the liquid mirror which lent itself to every caprice of the imagination? Did it show him some fugitive image waving him a last farewell? Was there some drowning shadow in the eddies? He seemed more sad than usual, and I did not like to ask him the cause of his sadness.

After the long separation from each other it was his part to confide in me, and for me to await his confidence. He had already told me as much of his past life as he wished me to know—his garrison life in India, his hunting expeditions, his various adventures: but, respecting his private feelings, he had never uttered a word. Fabian was evidently not one of those who tried to lighten their sorrow by talking about it, and he accordingly suffered more.

So we remained leaning over the taffrail, and when I turned my head I could see the great wheels emerging time after time. At one time Fabian said :

“That wake is really beautiful ; one could almost imagine that the waves were tracing letters as they rolled onward. Just look at the ‘l’s’ and the ‘e’s.’ Am I mistaken ? No, they are always the same letters—always the same !”

Fabian’s highly-wrought imagination saw in the waves what he wished to see. But what did those letters mean ? What recollection did they stir in his heart ? He had resumed his contemplative silence. Suddenly he exclaimed :

“Come, come, that vortex will engulf me !”

“What is the matter, Fabian ?” I asked, taking his hands in mine. “What ails you, my good friend ?”

“It is here,” he said, pressing his hand upon his chest. “I have a disease that will be fatal.”

“A disease !” I exclaimed, “without hope of cure !”

“No hope whatever,” he replied, and as he spoke these words he descended to the saloon, and shut himself in his cabin.

CHAPTER XII.

THE following day, Saturday, the 30th March, was very fine. The breeze had lulled, and the sea was calm. The furnaces had been "stirred up" a bit, and the steam-gauge ascended. The screw gave thirty-six revolutions a minute, and the speed of the *Great Eastern* exceeded twelve knots an hour.

The wind had gone round to the south. The mate gave orders for the two foresails and the mizzen to be hoisted, and under this sail the ship was perfectly steady. In consequence of the sunny weather the promenade decks again became lively, ladies came out in bright costumes, some walking, some sitting—I was nearly writing, on the green sward under the trees. Children resumed their games, which had been put a stop to during the last two days, and the dashing team of babies were trotted out at a great pace. Had there been only a few soldiers in uniform with their hands in their pockets and their noses in the air, one could almost have believed that it was a French street.

At a quarter to twelve Captain Anderson and two

officers ascended to the bridge. The weather being very favourable for observations, they were about to take the sun's altitude. They each held a sextant, and from time to time they took a sight of the southern horizon, towards which the glasses were inclined so as to reflect the sun.

"Twelve o'clock," said the captain.

Immediately the quartermaster sounded eight bells, and every clock on board was regulated accordingly.

Half an hour later the following notice was posted up:

Lat. $51^{\circ} 10' N.$
Long. $24^{\circ} 13' W.$
Miles run, 227.
Distance, 550.

We had therefore made 227 miles since the previous day, and it was at that moment forty-nine minutes past one by Greenwich time, and the *Great Eastern* was 550 miles from the Fastnet.

I did not see Fabian all that day. Uneasy at his prolonged absence, I several times went to the door of his cabin to assure myself that he had not quitted it.

The crowd on deck must have been objectionable to him, and he evidently sought retirement and quiet; but I met Captain Corsican, and for an hour we walked on the poop together, frequently speaking of Fabian. I could not resist telling the captain what had passed between MacElwin and myself the previous day.

"Yes," replied Captain Corsican, with an emotion

which he did not attempt to conceal, "two years ago Fabian had reason to think himself the happiest of men, and now he is the most miserable."

Then Corsican informed me how Fabian had become acquainted with a charming girl in Bombay, a certain Miss Hodges. He fell in love with her, and was beloved by her in return. There was apparently no obstacle to their union, when the young lady was, with her father's sanction, sought in marriage by a merchant of Calcutta. It was simply a business matter long ago arranged. Hodges, a determined, unfeeling man, and inaccessible to true sentiment, just then found himself in a somewhat delicate position, *vis-à-vis* to his Calcutta correspondent. The marriage would settle many unpleasant business matters, and so he sacrificed the happiness of his daughter to his worldly interests. The poor girl could not resist. Her hand was placed in the hand of a man whom she did not and could not love, and who, to all appearance, did not care for her. It was only a matter of business—a bad business, and an act to be deplored. The husband took away his wife the day after they were married, and since then Fabian, distracted with grief, sick unto death, had never seen the woman he had loved, and loved so fondly still.

When these facts had been stated, I could quite understand why Fabian appeared so grave.

"What was the young lady's name?" I asked.

"Ellen Hodges," replied Captain Corsican.

Ellen! That name explained the fancy of the letters

which Fabian thought he had distinguished in the foam on the previous day.

“And what is the husband’s name?”

“Harry Drake,” said Captain Corsican.

“Drake!” I exclaimed. “Why the man is on board.”

“He here!” said Corsican, seizing my hand and gazing eagerly into my face.

“Yes,” I replied; “on board.”

“I hope to heaven that he and Fabian will not meet,” said the captain, gravely. “Fortunately they do not know each other, or at least Fabian does not know Drake. But even the name mentioned in his hearing would cause an explosion.”

I then related to Captain Corsican what I knew concerning Harry Drake—that is to say, what Dean Pitferge had told me. I described him as he actually was, an adventurer both insolent and noisy, already ruined by his debaucheries, and ready to do anything to redeem his fortunes. As I was speaking Drake passed close to us, and I pointed him out to the captain. Corsican’s eyes flashed, he made a gesture of defiance which I arrested.

“That is, indeed, the face of a villain,” he said “But where is he going?”

“To America, they say, to endeavour to obtain by chance what he does not wish to work for.”

“Poor Ellen,” murmured the captain, “I wonder where she is now!”

"Perhaps this wretch has abandoned her," I said.

"Why may she not be on board?" said Corsican, looking at me fixedly.

This idea now struck me for the first time, but I rejected it. No, Ellen was not, could not be on board. She could never have escaped the inquisitorial eye of Doctor Pitferge. No, she had not accompanied Drake on this passage.

"I hope what you say may be true, sir," continued Captain Corsican, "for the sight of this poor victim reduced to such misery would prove a terrible blow to Fabian. I do not know what might happen. Fabian is a man who would kill Drake like a dog. At any rate, as you, like myself, are a friend of Fabian's, let me ask of you a proof of your friendship. Let us not lose sight of him, so that in case of any encounter one of us would be ready to interfere between him and his rival. You understand that no duel must ever take place between these men. No woman can possibly wed the murderer of her husband, no matter how unworthy that husband had proved himself to be."

I quite understood Captain Corsican. Fabian must not take the law into his own hand. This was certainly looking into the future; and how does it happen that the uncertainty of human affairs is so seldom taken into account? But a presentiment haunted me. Was it likely, in our everyday mixing on board, that the noisy personality of Drake should escape Fabian's notice. An incident, a detail, the mention of a name: a mere

nothing might betray each to the other. Ah ! how I longed to increase the speed of our vessel !

Before leaving Captain Corsican I promised to maintain a watch over our friend, and to keep an eye on Drake, while the captain undertook not to lose sight of him. Then with a hearty shake of the hand we parted.

Towards evening the sou'-west wind brought up a mist. The darkness was very great. The saloons, now brilliantly lighted, contrasted deeply with the profound gloom outside. Dancing and singing were kept up by turns, and always applauded tremendously, and cheers were not wanting when the comic actor, from T——, sang his song with all the assurance of a strolling player.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE next day, the 31st March, was a Sunday. How would it be passed on board? Would it be the English or American Sunday, on which the public-houses during the hours of Divine Service were closed, which suspends the butcher's knife over his victim's head, which stops the baker in his avocations, which causes a suspension of business, which extinguishes factory fires and condenses the smoke of workshops, which closes warehouses and opens churches, reduces the business of the railroads, contrary to French custom.

Yes, it was to be kept thus, or very nearly so. And, first, as an observance of the day, though the weather be never so fine and the wind favourable, the captain would not order the sails to be hoisted, though we might have gained several knots by so doing, because it would have been "improper." I thought it was very lucky for us that the paddles and screw were permitted to work as usual, and when I asked a stern Puritan the reason of this difference, he replied, "Sir, we must respect what

comes direct from the Deity. The winds are in His hands ; steam is in the hand of man !”

I contented myself with this reasoning, and set about observing what was going on.

The ship's company were all in full uniform, and well dressed. I should not have been astonished had I been told that the stokers were working in black dress suits. The officers and engineers wore most magnificent uniforms with gold buttons. Their shoes shone with a truly British brightness, and rivalled in brilliancy their oilskin caps. All these brave fellows appeared to be shod and capped with stars. The captain and lieutenant set the example, and, with new gloves and military-pattern boots, dazzling and scented, they walked to and fro upon the bridge waiting the hour for service.

The sea was lovely, and glinted with the first spring sunlight. Not a sail was to be seen. The *Great Eastern* was the mathematical centre of the extensive horizon. At ten o'clock a bell was rung slowly and at regular intervals. The ringer—a quartermaster in full uniform—gave this bell a sort of religious sound, instead of the usual metallic ring with which it accompanied the hissing of the boilers when the ship was running in a fog. One involuntarily looked for the village-bell which calls to church.

Then the passengers appeared in groups at the cabin-doors fore and aft. Men, women, and children were all carefully got up for the occasion. The decks were crowded, and the promenaders exchanged subdued

greetings. Everyone carried a prayer-book, and everyone waited until the very last stroke of the bell to commence the service. Just then I noticed a pile of Bibles being carried on the dish generally devoted to sandwiches. These Bibles were to be distributed to the worshippers.

The "church" was in the large saloon astern, and which exteriorly reminded me of the length and regularity of the Hotel of the Minister of Finance in the Rue Rivoli. I entered. The congregation was already numerous, and profound silence reigned.

The officers occupied the upper part of the "church," and in the centre was Captain Anderson, as clergyman. My friend, Dean Pitferge, was close to me. His quick little eyes took all the assembly in with rapid glance. I am afraid he was there more from curiosity than from any other motive.

At half-past ten the captain rose and began the service. He read in English a chapter from the Old Testament, the 10th of Exodus. After each verse the congregation repeated the following one. The short soprano of the children, the mezzo-soprano of the women, and the baritone of the men were easily distinguished. This biblical dialogue lasted for about half-an-hour. This ceremony—very simple and worthy of the occasion—was performed with Puritanical gravity. Captain Anderson acting as the clergyman on board in the midst of the immense ocean, and speaking to the crowd hanging over its abysses, demanded the respect of the most indifferent.

If the service had terminated with the reading it would have been well, but to the captain succeeded a preacher who could not fail to carry ill-feeling and temper into an assembly amongst whom only tolerance and goodwill should reign.

This was the clergyman of whom I have spoken, a fidgety little man—an intriguing Yankee—one of those ministers who possess such great influence in the New England States. His sermon was ready and the occasion propitious, and he wished to improve it! Would not the good Yorick have acted in like manner? I looked at Doctor Pitferge. The doctor did not frown, and he appeared rather disposed to hear the preacher hold forth.

He gravely buttoned up his long black coat, placed his hat upon the table, drew his handkerchief from his pocket and gently wiped his lips, then taking in all the congregation with a sweeping glance round the saloon, he said :

“In the beginning God created America in six days, and rested on the seventh——!”

That was enough for me—I reached the door!

CHAPTER XIV.

At luncheon Dean Pitferge told me that the preacher had worked out his text admirably—monitors, battering-rams, armed forts and torpedoes, had all been referred to in his discourse. And he himself had become great in consequence of the grandeur of America! If America likes to be extolled in this fashion, I can have nothing to say.

Entering the saloon, I read the notice as follows :

Lat. $50^{\circ} 8' N.$

Long. $30^{\circ} 44' W.$

Distance, 255 miles.

Just the same result. We had made only 1,100 miles, including the 310 miles between the Fastnet and Liverpool. About one-third of the voyage had been accomplished.

During the whole of that day all hands continued to "rest as enjoined." Not a piano was heard in the silent saloons. The chess-men did not leave their box, nor the cards their cases. The gambling-table was deserted. I took an opportunity to-day to present Doctor Pitferge to

Captain Corsican. The "original" amused the captain very much by relating to him the tittle-tattle of the *Great Eastern*. He tried to prove that the ship was doomed, bewitched, and that evil must befall it. The tale respecting the "soldered mechanic" pleased Corsican mightily, who, as a Scotchman, was very fond of the marvellous, but even he could not repress an incredulous smile.

"I see," said Doctor Pitferge, "that the captain has not much belief in my tales."

"Much! That is saying a good deal," replied the captain.

"Would you credit me any more, captain," said the doctor in a serious tone, "if I told you that the ship is haunted at night?"

"Haunted!" exclaimed the captain; "how? Are there ghosts amongst the passengers? And do you believe in them?"

"I believe what people worthy of credit have told me," replied Pitferge. "Now, I believe, with the officers of the watch and the sailors, unanimous on this point, that at the dead of night a vague shadowy form glides about the vessel. How it comes here they do not know any more than they can explain its disappearance."

"By St. Dunstan!" exclaimed the captain, "we will watch together for it."

"To-night?" asked the doctor.

"To-night, if you like. And you, sir," added the captain, turning to me, "will keep us company, I hope."

"No," said I, "I do not wish to penetrate the *incognito* of this phantom. Besides, I rather think the doctor is joking."

"I am not joking at all," replied the infatuated Pitferge.

"Look here, doctor," I said, "do you really believe that the dead walk upon the ship's decks?"

"I believe entirely in the dead who return to life," replied the doctor, "and that is the more surprising as I am a doctor of medicine."

"A doctor!" said Captain Corsican, recoiling as if the term had made him suspicious.

"You need have no fear, captain," replied the doctor, smiling good-naturedly, "I never practice while travelling!"

CHAPTER XV.

UPON the following day—the 1st of April—the ocean wore quite a spring-like aspect. It looked as green as a prairie under the influence of the sun's rays.

This 1st of April on the Atlantic was beautiful indeed. The waves rolled along voluptuously, and some porpoises tumbled like clowns in the foamy wake of the vessel.

When I met Captain Corsican, he informed me that the ghost mentioned by the doctor had not thought proper to appear. No doubt the night had not been sufficiently dark. It then occurred to me that this was some "sell" of Pitferge to make an "April Fool" of one of us, for in England and America, as in France, this practice is much honoured. Practical jokers and their victims were not wanting. The former laughed—the latter got angry. I rather think that some came to blows, but amongst Saxons such little demonstrations do not lead to duels, for it is well known that in England duelling carries with it severe penalties. Even officers and soldiers are not permitted to fight under any pretext whatever. The survivor is condemned to severe punish-

ment and to the greatest ignominy, and I remember the doctor telling me the name of an officer who was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude for having mortally wounded his adversary in a duel—and a very honourable encounter too. So it can be easily understood how, in the face of such a stringent law, duelling has disappeared from the British code of honour.

Under a brilliant sun the mid-day observation was very good. It gave as a result, latitude $48^{\circ} 47'$, longitude $36^{\circ} 48'$, and the distance run only 250 miles. The least rapid of the Atlantic steamers would have been justified in taking us in tow. Captain Anderson was very much put out. The engineer attributed the want of pressure to the bad ventilation of the new furnaces. But I think that the diminution of the speed was due to the paddle floats having been injudiciously shipped upon the inner circumference of the wheel.

However, about two o'clock in the afternoon, a change for the better was observable in the speed. I learnt this fact from the attitude of the pair of lovers before mentioned. Leaning against the starboard bulwarks, they exchanged little joyful murmurings, and clapped their hands with glee. They smilingly gazed at the escape-pipes which rose up beside the great chimneys, and whose apertures were crowned with a cloud of steam. The pressure had been increased upon the screw, but the steam was only raising the valves with a force of twenty-one pounds to the square inch, and could do no more. It was but a weak puff—a vague breath, a sigh

of the furnace—but those young people drank it in with their delighted gaze. Not even Denis Papin could have been more pleased when he saw the steam raising the lid of the celebrated pot.

“They are steaming, they are steaming!” cried the young girl, as a light vapour escaped also from her parted lips.

“Let us go and look at the engine,” replied the young man, placing the arm of his *fiancée* in his own.

Dean Pitferge had again joined me. We followed the loving couple up to the saloon-deck.

“How beautiful is youth!” exclaimed the doctor.

“Yes,” I replied, “particularly youth ‘engaged!’”

We were ourselves soon leaning over the railing of the screw engines. There, at the bottom of the vast abyss, sixty feet below, we could perceive the long horizontal pistons rushing one towards the other, bedewed with a drop of oil at each movement.

The young man had meantime taken his watch from his pocket, and the girl, leaning on his shoulder, followed the second-hand, and while she kept watch he counted the revolutions of the screw.

“One minute!” she cried.

“Thirty-seven revolutions,” he replied.

“Thirty-seven and a half,” said the doctor, who had “checked” the operation.

“And a half!” cried the girl. “Do you hear that, Edward. Oh! thank you, sir,” she added, turning to the worthy Pitferge with a joyous smile.

CHAPTER XVI.

As I entered the grand saloon, I saw this programme fixed to the door :

THIS EVENING.

PART I.

OCEAN TIMES	...	...	...	...	<i>Mr. MacAlpine.</i>
SONG, "Beautiful Isle of the Sea"	...	...	...	...	<i>Mr. Ewing.</i>
READING	...	...	...	...	<i>Mr. Affleet.</i>
PIANO SOLO, "Chant du Berger"	...	...	...	...	<i>Mrs. Alloway.</i>
SCOTCH SONG	...	...	...	...	<i>Doctor T—.</i>

(Interval of Ten Minutes).

PART II.

PIANO SOLO	...	...	...	...	<i>Mr. Paul V—.</i>
BURLESQUE, "Lady of Lyons"	...	...	...	...	<i>Dr. T—.</i>
ENTERTAINMENT	...	...	...	...	<i>Sir James Anderson.</i>
SONG, "Happy Moment"	...	...	...	...	<i>Mr. Norville.</i>
SONG, "You remember"	...	...	...	...	<i>Mr. Ewing.</i>

Finale—God Save the Queen.

This was, as will be perceived, a complete concert, with first part, entr'acte, second part, and finale, all complete. However, it seemed that something was wanting in the programme, for some one behind me muttered, "What ! no Mendelssohn !"

I turned round. It was only a steward who thus had protested against the omission of his favourite composer.

I went on deck again, and endeavoured to find MacElwin. Corsican came to tell me that Fabian had left his cabin, and I wished, without being considered intrusive, to draw him out of his seclusion. I encountered him on the forecastle. We chatted for some time, but he made no allusion to his past life. At times he was silent and pensive, absorbed in his own thoughts, unconscious of my address, and pressing his hand upon his heart as if to check some spasm. While we were walking together Harry Drake passed us several times. The same as ever, noisy and demonstrative, he waved his arms about like a mill in a dancing-room. Was I mistaken ? I could not say for certain, but it seemed to me that Drake stared at Fabian persistently, and the latter noticed it, for he said :

"Who is that man ?"

"I do not know," I replied.

"He is very objectionable," added Fabian.

If two ships be placed in the open sea without wind or current, they will come together in time. Throw two planets into space, and they will fall one on the other

Put two enemies in the middle of a crowd, and they will inevitably come in contact. It is fate ; only a question of time, that's all.

Evening arrived, and the concert took place as set forth in the programme. The well-filled saloon was brilliantly illuminated. Across the open skylights might be perceived the sunburnt faces and brawny hands of the crew, as if they were "let in" to the cornices of the ceiling. The doorways were crowded with the stewards. The greater number of the audience were seated on the sofas ranged along the sides and in the centre of the saloon, on the easy, the folding, and other chairs. All faced towards the piano, which was firmly bolted between the two doors opening into the ladies' cabin. From time to time a movement agitated the audience—chairs and other seats rolled over the floor ; a kind of swell gave the same undulation to all heads ; people clutched each other silently and seriously ; but, after all, there was no danger of falling, thanks to the subsidence.

The performance commenced with "Ocean Times." The "Ocean Times" was a daily paper, political, commercial, and literary, which some passengers had founded to supply the wants of those on board. Both Americans and English had taken to this kind of amusement very heartily. They composed their articles during the day. Let us admit that, if the editors were not hard to please in the quality of the articles, the readers were not more so. They were content with very little, and, indeed, with nothing at all.

The present number for the 1st of April contained a mild *Great Eastern* leader on politics and various facts which had no interest for a Frenchman, a burlesque article on the Money Market, some amusing telegrams, and some stale home news.

After all, these jokes had little amusement, except for those who manufactured them. The Honourable MacAlpine, a dogmatical American, read some absurd lucubrations with much applause from the audience, and ended the reading with the following intelligence :

“ It is stated that President Johnson has abdicated in favour of General Grant.”

“ It is stated as a fact that Pope Pius IX. has named the Prince Imperial as his successor.”

“ We are informed that Fernando Cortez is about to attack the Emperor Napoleon III. in revenge for his conquest of Mexico.”

When the “ Ocean Times ” had been applauded enough, the Hon. Mr. Ewing, a pleasant young man—a tenor—sang “ Beautiful Isle of the Sea ” with all the roughness of a British throat.

The “ Reading ” was a very questionable attraction. It consisted simply of a worthy Texan who read two or three pages of a book, beginning his sentences in a very low voice and ending them in a very high one. He was much applauded.

The “ Chant du Berger,” solo for the piano, by Mrs. Alloway, an Englishwoman, who played in a “ blonde minor,” as Théophile Gautier puts it, and a comic Scotch

song by Doctor T——, brought the first part of the programme to a close.

After an interval of ten minutes, during which no one dared to move, the second part commenced. The Frenchman, Paul V——, played two charming waltzes—not published—which were heartily encored. The ship's surgeon, a dark young man, rather conceited, recited a burlesque scene from the travestie of the "Lady of Lyons," a play much in fashion in England.

To the burlesque succeeded the "Entertainment." What had Sir James Anderson in store for us? Was it a conversation or a sermon? Neither. Sir James rose quietly, and smilingly drew a pack of cards from his pocket, turned back his wristbands, and performed some tricks, the grace of which redeemed their simplicity.

Cheers and applause greeted him.

After the "Happy Moment" of Mr. Norville, and "You Remember" (Mr. Ewing), the programme announced "God Save the Queen." But some Americans begged Paul V——, as he was a Frenchman, to play the "French National Air." So my complaisant countryman gave them the inevitable "Partant pour la Syrie."

Immediately some energetic Northerners demanded the "Marseillaise," and the obedient pianist, with a condescension which spoke more for his musical facility than for his political opinions, attacked the song of Rouget de l'Isle with vigour. This was the great success of the concert. Then the whole assembly,

standing up, slowly sang the "National Anthem," that prays God to save the Queen !

Taking it altogether, this entertainment was as good as these sort of things usually are—that is to say, it was chiefly a success for the performers and their friends. Fabian did not put in an appearance at all !

CHAPTER XVII.

DURING Monday night the sea got up very much. The bulkheads began to groan again, and the luggage once more began to make excursions across the saloons.

It was raining heavily when I went on deck at seven o'clock on Tuesday morning, and the wind had risen. The officer of the watch had taken in sail, and the vessel, no longer steadied by her canvas, rolled fearfully. The decks were deserted all day, even the saloons were unoccupied. The passengers had all taken refuge in their cabins, and two-thirds of them were missing at lunch and dinner, which was out of the question, for the tables took to turning of their own accord, and chess was an impossibility. Some seasoned ones lay upon the sofas reading or sleeping. Some even braved the rain on deck, where the sailors, clothed in tarpaulin, walked about philosophically. The first officer on the bridge, wrapped in his macintosh, kept watch. Amid all the rain, and during the squalls, his little eyes gleamed with pleasure. He liked that kind of thing, and the roll of the steamer was balm to his soul.

The waters of the heaven and earth mingled together in a mist a few cables' length from the ship. The sky was of a grey tint. Some birds flew, screeching through the damp fog. At ten o'clock a barque was signalled on the starboard bow, running before the wind, but her nationality could not be ascertained.

About eleven o'clock the wind moderated, and veered to the nor'-west. The rain suddenly ceased. Blue sky appeared in the openings of the clouds, the sun came out and gave us an opportunity to take an observation more or less exact. The notice posted was as follows :

Lat. $46^{\circ} 29'$ N.

Long. $42^{\circ} 25'$ W.

Distance, 256 miles.

So it will be seen that, although the pressure had increased in the boilers, the speed of the ship had not improved. But the westerly wind must be taken into consideration, which, no doubt, retarded our progress considerably.

At two o'clock the fog came down again. The wind fell and rose again almost immediately. The fog was so thick that the officers posted on the bridge could not see the men forward. These sea-fogs are most dangerous—are the cause of many accidents impossible to prevent—and a collision at sea is even more to be feared than a fire.

But in this fog all hands watched with the greatest care, a proceeding which was by no means superfluous, for suddenly, about three o'clock, a ship appeared at

less than 200 yards from the *Great Eastern*, her sails blown from the bolt-ropes, and "yawing" wildly, uncontrolled by her helm. Thanks to the promptitude with which the steersman received the warning, the *Great Eastern* managed to avoid a collision. The well-ordered signals are given by a bell placed on the fore-castle. One stroke of the bell signifies "ship ahead;" two strokes, "ship to starboard;" three strokes, "ship to larboard;" and so the man at the wheel is able to steer so as to avoid accident.

The wind freshened towards evening, but the rolling of the vessel was not so great, because the sea in the offing was to a certain extent protected by the shoals of Newfoundland, and could not get up to a very great height.

Another entertainment by Sir James Anderson was announced for this evening. At the hour named, the saloon was filled. But this time it was not legerdemain. Sir James Anderson proceeded to relate the history of the Atlantic cable which he had himself laid. He exhibited photographs of the various machines used in the immersion of it. He sent round a model of the "splice" which fastened the lengths of cable, and concluded his lecture amid loud cheers, the greater part of which were intended for the Honourable Cyrus Field, who was present that evening.

CHAPTER XVIII.

NEXT day, the 3rd April, the horizon at early morning displayed that peculiar tint which English people call "blink." It was the whitish reflection which gives notice of proximity to ice. In fact, the *Great Eastern* was then sailing in the latitude of the first icebergs which are detached from those in Davis's Straits. A special look-out service was organised in order to avoid any collision with these enormous blocks.

It was then blowing strongly from the west. Long tails of cloud, rags of vapour, hung over the ocean. In the openings one could distinguish patches of sky. A dull plashing noise arose from the waves torn by the wind, and the dust-like drops fell around in spray.

Neither Fabian, Captain Corsican, nor Doctor Pitferge had yet appeared on deck. I went forward. There in a corner, where the bulwarks formed an angle—a sort of retreat in which a hermit might have comfortably retired from the world—I took up my position upon a deck-bight, and my feet supported by an immense pulley.

The wind was right ahead, and, beating against the bows, passed over me. This was a capital place for reflection. From this spot I could survey the whole of the vessel. I could follow the long, lightly curving "lines" which rose again towards the stern. In the foreground a top-man was clinging to the shrouds of the foremast with one hand while he worked dexterously with the other. Farther off, on the hurricane-deck, walked the sailor on the watch with extended legs, and peering intently through the fog. More astern still, upon the bridge, I could distinguish the officer of the watch, who, with rounded shoulders, and with a hood over his head, struggled against the force of the wind. I could not distinguish the sea at all—nothing but a little blue line was visible behind the paddle-boxes. Impelled by her powerful engines the steamer divided the waves with her sharp "cutwater," with a hissing sound, like the sides of a furnace the fires of which are in fierce activity.

The volumes of steam, snatched from the escape-pipes by the wind, which rapidly condensed it, twined around the chimneys. But the *Great Eastern*, head to wind, and carried upon three waves, scarcely felt the sea, upon which an ordinary transatlantic "liner" would have been terribly knocked about.

At half-past twelve, the notice-paper informed us, that we were in latitude $44^{\circ} 53'$, longitude $47^{\circ} 6'$ west. Only 227 miles in twenty-four hours. The "engaged" couple must have anathematised the wheels that would

not turn, the lazy screw, and the want of steam, which would not propel them as fast as was desirable.

At three o'clock the sun, cleared of clouds by the wind, shone out brightly. The horizon, clearly defined, appeared to be an enlarged circle, of which the *Great Eastern* was the centre. The wind dropped, but the sea still rolled along in large, green, foaming waves. Such a breeze could not raise such a sea, the billows were disproportionate. The Atlantic was sulky!

At 3.35 P.M. a ship was signalled to larboard. She hoisted her number. She proved to be an American vessel, the *Illinois*, bound for England.

Just then Lieutenant H— informed me that we were passing over the tail of the banks of Newfoundland. Here is the rich cod-fishery, three fish from which would be sufficient to supply England and America, if all their eggs came to maturity.

The day passed without incident. The deck was occupied by the usual promenaders. So far Fabian and Harry Drake had not met, for Captain Archibald and I had not lost sight of them. The usual quiet people met in the grand saloon in the evening. Here were the same amusements—reading and singing provoked the same applause of the same people for the same people. A change was introduced this evening by a very animated discussion between a Northerner and a Texan. The latter demanded an Emperor for the Southern States, but fortunately this political dissertation, which threatened

to extend to a quarrel, was interrupted by the arrival of an imaginary despatch addressed to the *Ocean Times* in the following terms :

“ Captain Semmes, Minister of War, has made the South pay for the ravages of the *Alabama*.”

CHAPTER XIX.

I LEFT the brilliantly-lighted saloon, and went up on deck with Captain Corsican. The night was very dark, not a star was to be seen; the gloom was profound all round the ship. The windows of the saloon glowed like furnace grates. The watch on the poop could scarcely be distinguished as they slowly moved to and fro. But we could breathe the fresh air, and the captain inhaled it with open mouth.

"I was almost suffocated in that saloon," he said. "Here, at any rate, I can breathe the open air, which is reviving. I must have my hundred cubic yards of pure air every twenty-four hours or I get half-stifled."

"Breathe freely, captain," I replied. "There is air enough here for everybody, and the breeze will not cheat you of your supply. What a grand thing oxygen is, and yet it must be confessed that dwellers in London and Paris only know it by name."

"Yes," replied the captain, "they prefer carbonic acid. No accounting for taste. For my own part I detest it, even in champagne!"

Chatting all the time, we paced the deck on the star-board side, sheltered from the wind by the high deck cabins. Great volumes of smoke, mingled with sparks, escaped from the black chimneys. The beat of the engines made an accompaniment to the whistling of the wind, which sounded through the wire shrouds like the chords of a harp. Through all this, came the cry of "All's well" every quarter of an hour from the watch on deck.

No precaution had been neglected to assure the safety of the ship in the neighbourhood of the ice. Every half-hour the captain caused a bucket of water to be drawn, so as to ascertain the temperature ; and had the temperature fallen even one degree, he would have altered his course. He knew that the *Periere* had been blocked, seven days previously, in these latitudes ; and this was a danger to be avoided. Besides, his regulations for the night were to keep a strict look-out. The captain himself never went to bed all night. Two officers remained with him upon the bridge—one to signal to the paddle-engines, the other for the screw. Besides these, a lieutenant and two men kept watch on the poop, while a quartermaster and a sailor stood at the forecastle. The passengers might therefore rest in peace.

Having taken note of these arrangements, Captain Corsican and I returned to the stern of the ship. We had determined to pass some time upon the upper deck before going below to our cabins, as peaceable citizens might pass the time in the *Place* of their town.

The place appeared deserted. Our eyes soon became accustomed to the obscurity ; and we perceived a man resting his elbow upon the rail, standing perfectly motionless. Corsican, having taken a long look at him, said to me :

“ It is Fabian.”

It was Fabian indeed. We recognised him ; but, wrapped in contemplation, he did not notice us. His eyes were fixed at a point of the deck, and I could see them glitter in the dark. What was he contemplating so fixedly ? How could he pierce this obscurity ? I thought it better to let him alone, but Captain Corsican approached him.

“ Fabian !” said he.

Fabian made no answer—he had not heard himself addressed. Corsican spoke again. Fabian shuddered, turned his head, and pronounced a single word :

“ Hush !”

Then with his extended hand he indicated a shadow which was moving slowly at the end of the deck. It was this scarcely-visible figure that Fabian was so attentively regarding ; then, smiling sadly, he muttered :

“ The black lady !”

I could not help shuddering. Captain Corsican had seized my arm, and I could feel it tremble too. The same idea struck us both—this shade was the apparition spoken of by Doctor Pitferge.

Fabian had relapsed into his former contemplative state. As for myself, I regarded this human figure with

a strange feeling at my heart and with a certain awe. The outline of the figure was scarcely defined, but soon it became clearer. She advanced, hesitated, proceeded, stopped again, and once more went on, seeming to glide rather than walk. A wandering soul! At ten paces from us she stopped, motionless. I was then able to distinguish the slender form of a lady, closely wrapped up in a kind of brown burnous, her face concealed by a thick veil.

"A maniac, a maniac! Is it not so?" murmured Fabian.

A mad woman, indeed! But Fabian was not addressing us; he was talking to himself.

Meanwhile the poor creature approached nearer to us. I could perceive the eyes glisten through the veil, as they were fixed on Fabian. She came close to him. Fabian started up as if galvanised. The veiled woman placed her hand upon her heart, as though to count its pulsations; then, gliding away, she disappeared at the stern.

Fabian fell on his knees, and, extending his arms, cried out:

"'Tis she! 'tis she!"

Then, shaking his head, he muttered:

"What an hallucination!"

Captain Corsican then took his hand, and said: "Come, Fabian, come!" and as he spoke he led his unhappy friend away.

CHAPTER XX.

CORSICAN and I had now no longer any doubt. This was Ellen, the *fiancée* of Fabian, the wife of Harry Drake. Fate had brought them together on board this ship. Fabian had not actually recognised her, although he had exclaimed "'Tis she !" And how could he have recognised her. But he was not wrong in taking her for a mad woman, for she was mad ; and no doubt despair, grief, the dead love in her heart, the contact with the wretch who had snatched her from Fabian ; the ruin, misery, and shame had broken her heart. I spoke with Corsican about all this the following morning. We had no doubt whatever of the identity of the lady. It was Ellen whom Harry Drake was taking with him to America, and whom he still associated in his reckless life. The eyes of the captain glowed with an angry fire as he thought of the wretch, and I felt my heart beat wildly too. What could we avail against the husband—the master ? Nothing. But the most important point was to prevent a meeting between Fabian and Ellen, for Fabian would be sure to recognise Ellen at last, and that

would precipitate the catastrophe we wished to avoid. But we had great hopes that these unhappy ones would never meet. Ellen never appeared during the day, either in the saloon or on deck. Only at night, doubtless eluding her gaoler, she came out to bathe herself in the dewy air and demand of the winds a smooth passage. In four days at latest the *Great Eastern* would reach New York, and we might fairly hope that chance would not play with our watchfulness, and that Fabian would not discover Ellen's presence on board during this passage. But we reckoned without our host.

The course of the vessel had been altered a little during the night. Three times had the ship's head been turned to the south, as the temperature of the water was found to be 27° Fahrenheit; that is to say, $3-4^{\circ}$ Centigrade, below zero. We could no longer dispute the near approach of ice. Indeed in the morning the sky presented the peculiar light—the atmosphere was white and misty, and in the north a brilliant reflection was visible, all produced by the icebergs. A biting wind got up, and about ten o'clock a little fine snow began to fall and powdered the deck. Then a fog-bank arose, and we sounded our approach by loud whistling, which terrible noise scared the sea-birds which had taken refuge in the rigging. At half-past ten the mist lifted, and we sighted a screw steamer to starboard. The white top of her funnel proclaimed her one of the Inman fleet of vessels plying between Liverpool and New York. She hoisted her number, and we saw she was the *City of Limerick*,

1,530 tons and 256 horse-power. She had left New York on the Saturday, and was late in consequence.

Before lunch some passengers got up a pool, which did not fail to please those addicted to gambling and betting. The result of the pool would not be known for four days, and was termed "Pilot's Pool." Whenever a vessel arrives near land, as everyone is aware, a pilot is put on board, so the twenty-four hours of the day are divided into forty-eight half hours, or ninety-six quarters, according to the number of passengers. Every passenger puts in a dollar and he draws a half-hour, or a quarter, as the case may be. The winner of the pool is he who holds the ticket for the half or quarter-hour during which the pilot comes on board. It is very simple—it is not a horse race, but a time race.

A Canadian, the Hon. Mr. MacAlpine, took the lead in this affair. He very soon got together ninety-six players, and several ladies amongst them, quite ready for the game. I went with the stream, and staked my dollar. My "lot" gave me the seventy-fourth quarter of an hour. This was a bad lot, and left me no chance of making anything. The divisions of time are reckoned from mid-day to mid-day, so there are day-quarters of the hours and night-quarters. These last have little chance, for ships rarely go close in shore during the night, and consequently the chances of getting a pilot on board at that time are much diminished. But I consoled myself very easily.

When I descended to the saloon I saw that a lecture

was announced for that evening. The Utah missionary had called a meeting on Mormonism. This was a good opportunity to initiate oneself into the mysteries of the City of the Saints. Besides, this elder, Mr. Hatch, was an orator, and no mean speaker. The execution could not fail to be worthy of the subject. The passengers received the announcement with favour.

The record of distance was now as follows :

Lat. $42^{\circ} 32' N.$
Long. $51^{\circ} 59' W.$
Distance run, 254 miles.

About 3 P.M., the approach of a large four-masted steamer was signalled. This steamer altered her course a little, so as to exchange numbers with the *Great Eastern*. Our captain also ported his helm a bit, and the steamer soon gave us her name. She was the *Atlanta*, one of the large vessels performing the service from London to New York, touching at Brest. She saluted us, and we returned it, and shortly afterwards we pursued our respective courses.

At this moment Dean Pitferge informed me, and not without disappointment, that the lecture proposed by Mr. Hatch had been forbidden. The female puritans on board had not permitted their husbands to be initiated into the mysteries of Mormonism.

CHAPTER XXI.

AT four o'clock the sky cleared, the sea grew calm, and the *Great Eastern* no longer rolled. One could almost have imagined oneself on *terra firma*. The steadiness of the vessel inspired some of the passengers to get up races. The Epsom course could not offer a better run, and as for horses, in default of "Gladiateur" or "La Tocque," we had some Scotchmen, who did quite as well. The news soon spread, and the sportsmen hurried up, and spectators left their cabins and the saloons. The Hon. Mr. MacCarthy, an Englishman, was nominated steward, and the runners presented themselves at once. These were half-a-dozen sailors, a kind of centaurs, half horse, half jockey, all ready to try for the *Great Eastern* prize.

The two "boulevards" formed the racecourse, the competitors to run three times round the ship, a distance of something over 1,300 yards. This was quite enough.

The grand stand—I mean the poop—was soon invaded by the spectators, glasses in hand, and some had

actually mounted the traditional green veil (to keep off the Atlantic dust perhaps). There was a scarcity of carriages, I must confess, but there was plenty of room for them. Ladies in "killing" costumes occupied the upper-deck astern. The *coup-d'œil* was very pleasing.

Fabian, Captain Corsican, Doctor Pitferge, and myself were posted on the fore-deck. This was what might be termed the judge's stand. Here all the gentlemen riders were assembled. Before us were the starting and winning posts. Betting was quickly commenced with true British fervour. Considerable sums were laid, but only on the appearance of the runners, whose merits had not yet been inscribed in the "stud-book."

It was with some uneasiness that I noticed Harry Drake mingle with the crowd, with all his usual coolness, disputing, arguing, and deciding in a tone admitting of no reply. Very fortunately, Fabian, though he had invested some pounds upon the race, appeared to be quite indifferent to all this excitement. He kept aloof—his face still careworn, his thoughts far away.

Amongst the competitors two attracted attention more particularly. One, a Scotchman, named Wilmore, a short, thin man, lithe and bony, with well-developed chest and bright eyes, was one of the favourites. The other, a great strong-limbed fellow, an Irishman, named O'Kelly, long-legged as a race-horse, disputed the chances with Wilmore. Three to one was the betting on him; and I was about to follow the general opinion, when the doctor whispered:

"Back the little man. Take my advice ; the big fellow won't be in it."

"What do you mean ?" I asked.

"I mean that the Irishman is no good. He may have a turn of speed, but he cannot 'stay.' The little Scotchman will win. Look at his body, well placed on the legs, and his broad chest. He ought to take the lead more than once, as he moves one foot over the other in a way that ought to give him 200 paces a minute. Bet on him, I tell you ; you will not regret it."

I followed the advice of the knowing doctor, and bet on Wilmore. The other four runners were not in the betting.

Lots were drawn for station. The Irishman got choice, and took the rope side. The six runners were placed in line at the post. No false start was feared, so the steward had an easy task.

The signal was given. A cheer hailed the start. The "knowing ones" soon perceived that Wilmore and O'Kelly were professionals. Without troubling themselves about their rivals, who distanced them, panting, they went on steadily, their bodies slightly bent, heads erect, the fore-arm pressed to the chest, the fists carried in front, and moving in unison with the opposite foot respectively. Their feet were naked ; the heels never touched the ground, and thus left them the elasticity necessary to preserve the proper force. In a word, every movement of their bodies was regular and in keeping.

At the second round O'Kelly and Wilmore, still

together, had distanced the other exhausted runners. This proved the truth of the doctor's remark :

"They do not run with their legs, but with the chest. Limbs are good, but lungs are better."

At the penultimate turn the spectators cheered their favourites. The cries and hurrahs and bravos resounded in all directions.

"The little fellow will win," said Pitferge. "Look, he is scarcely breathing ; his rival is panting."

Wilmore's face was calm and pale. O'Kelly was steaming like damp hay. He was regularly "pumped," to use the slang term. But they still ran side by side. At length they passed the grand saloon deck ; then the engine-hatch ; and finally the winning-post.

"Hurrah for Wilmore !" cried some.

"Hurrah for O'Kelly !" cried others.

"Wilmore has won !"

"No, it is a dead heat !"

In fact, Wilmore had won by a "short head," as the Honourable Mr. MacCarthy decided. However, the discussion still continued, and strong language ensued. The backers of the Irishman, and particularly Harry Drake, maintained that it was a "dead heat," and that the race ought to be run over again.

But, at this moment, Fabian, impelled by an irresistible impulse, approached Drake and said :

"You are wrong, sir ; the winner is the Scotchman."

Drake advanced quickly towards Fabian :

"What do you say?" he asked in a menacing tone.

"I say you are wrong," replied Fabian quietly.

"No doubt," said Drake, "because you backed Wilmore."

"I betted on O'Kelly, like yourself," replied Fabian. "I have lost and have paid."

"Sir!" cried Drake. "Do you presume to teach me——!"

But he did not finish the sentence, for Captain Corsican interposed between them, with the intention to take the quarrel upon himself. He treated Drake with undisguised contempt, but Drake evidently had no inclination to quarrel with him. So when Corsican had ceased speaking, Drake, crossing his arms, and addressing Fabian, said, with an evil smile :

"So, sir, you require some one to fight your battles for you, I perceive."

Fabian grew deadly pale. He sprang at Drake, but I held him back. On the other hand, that scoundrel's friends dragged him away, but not before he had cast a glance of deadly hate at his adversary.

Captain Corsican and I went downstairs with Fabian, who said quietly :

"I will box that cad's ears as soon as ever I get the chance !"

CHAPTER XXII.

DURING Friday night the *Great Eastern* crossed the Gulf Stream, whose darker and warmer waters cut through the surrounding depths. The surface water of this current forced between the Atlantic waves is actually slightly convex. It is distinctly a river flowing between two liquid banks, and one of the largest in the world, for it reduces the Amazon and the Mississippi to insignificant brooks. The water drawn up during the night was higher by 27° Farenheit, to 51° , or 12° Centigrade.

The 5th April was ushered in by a splendid sunrise. The long waves were burnished with the rays, and a warm sou'-west breeze sighed through the rigging. This was the commencement of the fine weather. The sun, having clothed the fields of the continent with verdure, brought out new toilettes on board. Vegetation is sometimes backward—fashion never. The boulevards were soon alive with the numerous groups of promenaders, and looked like the Champs-Élysées on a fine Sunday in May.

During the whole morning I did not once see Captain

Corsican. Wishing to have some news of Fabian, I went to his cabin off the grand saloon and knocked. Receiving no answer, I entered. Fabian was not there.

I went on deck again, but amongst all the passengers I could not distinguish either of my friends or the doctor. It then occurred to me to ascertain in what part of the ship the unfortunate Ellen was shut up. What cabin did she occupy? What had Drake done with her? To what hands had he confided this unhappy woman, while he left her for days at a time. Doubtless to the mercenary care of some stewardess or nurse. I very much wished to ascertain her whereabouts, not from any vain curiosity, but in the interest of Ellen and Fabian, if for no other reason than to prevent a meeting which was always to be dreaded.

I commenced my quest in the cabins, near the ladies' large saloon, and searched the corridors on both decks. This inspection was soon completed, as the passengers' names are written on a card over the door of each cabin, so as to facilitate the steward's work.

I did not find Harry Drake's name, which was not very surprising, for he probably preferred the stern-cabins opening into the less-frequented saloons. But, as a matter of fact, no difference existed between the accommodation of the cabins, for only one class of passengers were admitted.

I then continued my search in the direction of the dining-saloons, and I carefully followed the side passages running between the double row of cabins. All the

rooms were occupied, with the passengers' names recorded on the doors, but Drake's name was still absent. This time I was astonished at the absence of the name, for I believed I had visited the whole of our floating city, and I did not know of any other more secluded district. I then made inquiry of a steward, who informed me that there were a hundred more cabins behind the dining-rooms.

"How can I get down to them?" I asked.

"By a staircase which leads from the deck at the side of the large deck-cabin."

"Thanks, my friend. Do you know the cabin occupied by Mr. Harry Drake?"

"No, sir, I do not," replied the steward.

I then reascended to the deck, and following along by the deck-cabin, I reached the door which closed the staircase indicated by the steward. This staircase led, not to any large saloons, but to a simple dark landing, around which was disposed a double range of cabins. If Harry Drake really wished to conceal Ellen he could not have selected a place more suitable to the purpose.

The greater number of the cabins were unoccupied. I walked along the landing and the side passages. Some few names were written upon the doors, two or three at most, but not Drake's. However, I had made a minute inspection of this compartment, and was about to retire very much disappointed when a distant and almost inaudible murmur smote my ears. This sound came from the end of the corridor on the left. I advanced in that

direction. The sound, at first scarcely perceptible, now increased. I could hear a kind of plaintive chaunt, or rather a slow melopœia, the words of which I could not distinguish.

I listened. It was a woman who was singing, but in that voice one could distinguish a deep-seated melancholy.

Might not this be the maniac's voice? I could not be deceived in this. I gently approached cabin No. 775. It was the last in the dark corridor, and could only be lighted by one of the lowest ports of the *Great Eastern*. There was no name on the door, as Harry Drake was careful not to let people know the place in which he shut Ellen up.

I could not distinctly hear the unfortunate creature's voice. Her song was only a string of phrases frequently interrupted, but there was at the same time something pleasing yet sad in it. It was like a succession of oddly-divided stanzas, such as might have been sung by a person in a magnetic sleep.

No. Although I had no means of identifying her, I did not doubt that it was Ellen who was singing.

I listened for some minutes and was about to retire, when I heard a footstep in the central landing. Was this Drake? For Ellen's and for Fabian's sake I did not wish to be discovered here. Fortunately the conformation of the corridors would enable me to reach the deck unperceived. Nevertheless, I determined to wait and see who was coming. The obscurity favoured me, and stand-

ing in an angle of the passage I could see without being seen.

Meanwhile the footsteps had ceased, and, as if by a curious coincidence, Ellen's song was hushed at the same time. I waited. The song soon began again, and the deck creaked beneath a slowly approaching footstep. I bent forward, and at the end of the corridor, in the uncertain light that filtered through the openings of the cabins, I recognised Fabian.

It was indeed my unhappy friend. What sympathetic feeling had led him hither? Had he already discovered the lady's retreat? I did not know what to think. Fabian advanced slowly along the partitions, listening, and following the voice like a clue of thread, which drew him onward despite himself, and with a power of which he was unconscious. Yet it seemed to me as if the song died away at his approach, and that the thread would break. Fabian got close to the cabin, and stopped.

How his heart must have ached at those sad accents! how his whole being must have thrilled! The voice must have conjured up some remembrances of past days. And yet, ignorant as he was of Harry Drake's being on board, how could he have suspected Ellen's presence? It was impossible. He had only been attracted by the sad strains, which he never doubted responded to the great grief that was consuming him.

Fabian continued to listen. What would he do? Would he call out to the mad woman? Suppose Ellen was suddenly to appear! It was quite possible; there

was always danger in such circumstances. But Fabian continued to draw nearer to the cabin. The song, which had been dying away, now ceased altogether; then a piercing shriek was heard.

Had Ellen been made aware, by some magnetic influence, of the near presence of her lover? Fabian's attitude was alarming. He had started back, and was collecting himself for a spring. Was he about to break in the door? I thought it likely, so I threw myself upon him.

He recognised me. I drew him away. He yielded. Then, in a hollow voice, he said :

"Do you know who that unhappy woman is?"

"No, Fabian, no."

"It is the mad woman," he said. "It is a voice from the other world. But this madness is not incurable. I believe that a little devoted affection, a little love, would completely cure that poor woman."

We had reached the deck now. Fabian, without saying anything more, quitted me almost immediately, but I did not lose sight of him till I had seen him enter his own cabin.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SOON afterwards I encountered Captain Corsican, and told him what I had just witnessed. He perceived as well as I that the situation was becoming complicated. Could we only have foreseen the danger of it! Ah, how we would have wished to hasten the speed of the *Great Eastern*, and to put the entire ocean between Drake and Fabian!

As we separated, Captain Corsican and I agreed to keep a stricter watch than ever upon the actors in this drama, the *dénouement* of which might come upon us any day.

We were now expecting the *Australasian*, a Cunard steamer of 2,760 tons, which ran between Liverpool and New York. She had left America on the Tuesday morning, and must soon make her appearance. We looked anxiously for her, but she did not appear.

About eleven o'clock the English passengers got up a subscription for the wounded on board, some of whom had not been able to leave the "hospital." Amongst these was the master, who, it was feared, would be lame

for life. The list was covered with signatures, but not without some dispute as to details.

At noon the sun permitted us to take an exact observation :

Long. $58^{\circ} 37' W.$

Lat. $41^{\circ} 41' N.$

Distance run, 257 miles.

We had the latitude almost to a second. The youthful *fiancés*, who came to read the notice, pouted a little at the discovery ; and they had reason to complain of the steam, no doubt.

Before lunch Captain Anderson wished to divert the passengers from the weariness of the voyage by getting up gymnastic performances, under his personal superintendence. About fifty men, each armed with a stick, imitated his movements exactly. These improvised gymnasts moved as methodically as soldiers on parade.

A new entertainment was announced for this evening. I was not present at it. These incessant amusements, repeated over and over, bored me. A second journal, a rival of the *Ocean Times*, had been started. That evening the two papers were fused.

I passed the early hours of the night on deck. The sea was getting up, and betokened bad weather, although the sky was still clear. The rolling of the vessel also became more pronounced. Lying down at the side of the upper deck, I admired the constellations that were glittering above. The stars twinkled in the zenith, and although the unassisted eye can perceive only five thou-

sand extended over all the heaven, on that evening one would have believed he could have counted millions. I could see the tail of Pegasus trailing along the horizon in all its splendour, like the starry robe of a fairy queen. The Pleiades mounted upwards with Gemini, which, despite their name, do not rise one after the other, like the fabled heroes. Taurus gleamed at me with his fiery eye. From the summit of the blue vault Vega (our future Pole-star) glittered, and not far from it was the river of diamonds forming the Northern Cross. All these constellations appeared to move with the rolling of the ship, and during one oscillation I saw the main-mast describe an arc distinctly from β in the Great Bear to Altair in the Eagle; while the moon, already low, dipped the extremity of her crescent to the horizon.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE night proved very stormy, the vessel, lying broadside to the sea, rolled ceaselessly. The furniture broke away, and the crockery resumed its clatter. The wind had evidently freshened, and, besides, the *Great Eastern* was just then in the worst bit of sea she could encounter.

At 6 A.M. I dragged myself to the staircase leading to the upper deck. By holding tightly, and taking advantage of the alternate oscillations, I managed to ascend and to reach the deck. Thence, with some trouble, I reached the poop. It was deserted, if one may so speak when Dr. Pitferge was there. He, worthy man, was firmly propped up, had turned his back to the wind, and his right leg was twined between the rails. He signed to me to approach—signed with his head, of course, for his arms were fully occupied in sustaining him against the fury of the gale. After some reptile-like evolutions, and crawling like a worm along the deck, I reached the upper deck, where I fixed myself like the doctor.

“Come along,” he cried, “this will last. Ha! you

Great Eastern. A cyclone has been specially ordered out to meet you on your arrival in these latitudes !”

The doctor was only able to jerk out these sentences, for the wind swallowed up half his words. But I had understood him. The word “cyclone” explained everything.

It is well known that the circular storms—called hurricanes in the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic ; tornadoes on the African coast ; simooms in the Desert ; typhoons in the China Seas—are tempests of such enormous power that they imperil the largest vessels. Now the *Great Eastern* was caught in one, how would she behave ?

“She will go to grief,” said Dr. Pitferge. “Look how she plunges her nose into it !”

This sea-phrase exactly expressed the behaviour of the vessel. Her stem disappeared entirely beneath the mountains of water that swept against the larboard bow. Farther off we could see something of the ocean, which presented all the appearance of a hurricane. Towards seven o'clock the tempest broke over us. The sea was awful. The smaller undulations which are usually perceptible within the great billows were swept away by the wind, and the ocean was rolled up into long crested waves, which broke with a terrible uproar. The sea got higher and higher every minute, and the *Great Eastern*, getting it almost on the beam, rolled terrifically.

“We must do one of two things,” said the doctor, with all the coolness of a sailor. “Either we must put

the vessel's head to the sea at half-speed, or run before the wind, and not face such a sea as this. But Captain Anderson will not do one or the other of these things."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Because," replied the doctor, "because something **is** bound to happen to the ship!"

I turned round and perceived the captain, the lieutenant, and the chief-engineer, wrapped up in their sou'-westers, clinging to the hand-rail of the bridge. The spray broke over them in showers. The captain smiling as usual, the first officer laughed outright, and displayed his white teeth as the vessel pitched enough to shake the masts and chimneys out of her.

But this obstinate wilfulness on the part of the captain really astonished me. At half-past seven the appearance of the Atlantic was awful. Whole seas swept the fore-castle time after time.

I kept watching this magnificent sight, the giant struggling against the waves. To a certain extent I could understand the determination of the "Master after Providence" not to yield, but I forgot that the power of the sea is infinite, and that nothing human can successfully resist it. And powerful as she was, the "big ship" **had** to turn and flee before the tempest.

At eight o'clock a violent concussion occurred. An enormous "sea" had struck the ship on the larboard bow.

"That was no gentle slap on the ear," said the doctor, "it was a regular blow in the face!"

And in fact the blow in the face had bruised us severely. Pieces of wood appeared upon the crests of the waves. Was this part of our hull that the sea was carrying away, or the *débris* of a strange vessel?

At a sign from the captain the *Great Eastern* fell off a point, to avoid the wreckage which threatened to get entangled in the paddles. Looking more closely, I perceived that the sea had stove in the bulwarks, which had been fifty feet above the water. The head-timbers were broken, the taggers wrenched off, and the broken skylights still shook in their fittings. The *Great Eastern* had received a "staggerer," but she held on her way with unflinching audacity. It was necessary to clear away the *débris* as quickly as possible, and so to avoid the waves was indispensable, but the ship obstinately held on her course. All the mettle of the captain seemed to animate her. He did not want to give in, and he didn't. An officer and some men were sent forward to clear the deck.

"Now look out," said the doctor. "Misfortune is not far off!"

The sailors went forward; we lashed ourselves to the second mast. We looked through the spray, which, taking us sideways, fell in a shower upon the deck after every wave. Suddenly another enormous sea, more violent than the first, passing through the breach in the bulwarks, tore away the large sheet of cast-iron covering the "bitts," demolished the massive covering of the hatchway, and, bearing down in full force against the

starboard bulwarks, tore them off like a sail carried away by the wind !

The sailors had been knocked down ; the officer picked himself up, half drowned, and shook his red whiskers. Then, perceiving one of the men lying insensible under the fluke of an anchor, he rushed towards him, raised him on his shoulders, and carried him aft. The rest of the crew, meantime, descended through the broken hatchway. There was three feet of water 'tween-decks. More spars covered the sea, and amongst them were some thousands of the dolls which my countryman of the Rue Chapon had hoped to acclimatise in America. Their tiny bodies, torn from the box by the sea, went bobbing about upon the waves, and their appearance under less grave circumstances would have been supremely ridiculous. Meanwhile, the water was gaining on the ship ; great waves kept pouring down through the breaches, and to such an extent that the engineer reported that the *Great Eastern* had shipped more than 2,000 tons of water—enough to sink a first-class frigate !

“Very good, indeed !” cried the doctor, whose hat had been carried away !

To continue in this position had now become impossible. To go ahead was now folly. We must “wear” ship, and go before the wind. To steam head to wind in that crippled condition was like a man attempting to swim under water with his mouth open.

Captain Anderson understood this at last. I saw him go to the small wheel on the bridge which moves

the rudder. The engines were reversed, the helm was put up ; the *Great Eastern* wore round like a boat, and ran before the wind, on a northerly course.

At that moment the captain, usually so calm and collected, cried out angrily :

“My ship is disgraced for ever !”

CHAPTER XXV.

SCARCELY had the *Great Eastern* gone about than all rolling ceased. It was absolute steadiness after the late agitation. Breakfast was served. The majority of the passengers, reassured by the steady sailing of the ship, descended to the dining-rooms, and enjoyed the meal undisturbed by shock or pitching. Not a plate fell down, not a glass was upset, although the table-racks had not been put up. But three-quarters of an hour later the furniture commenced to dance, the suspended lamps waved about, the crockery clashed upon the pantry shelves, for the *Great Eastern* had resumed her westerly course. I went up on deck with Doctor Pitferge, who, meeting the man of dolls, said to him :

“Your little people, sir, have been severely tested. Those children will never prattle in the States of the Union.”

“No matter,” replied the enterprising Parisian ; “the consignment was insured ; and my secret has not been drowned with them. We can easily get more of them.”

Evidently my countryman was not despairing. He

saluted us in a cheerful manner, and we proceeded towards the stern. There we learnt from the man at the wheel that the rudder-chains had been jammed, in the interval between the two seas striking us.

"If this accident had happened as we were 'going about,' I do not know what the result might have been," said Pitferge, "for the sea would have poured in. The steam-pumps are already at work, but all the water is not out yet."

"And the unfortunate sailor?" I asked.

"He is severely hurt about the head. Poor fellow! He is a young fisherman, married, with two children, who is making his first voyage of this kind. The ship's doctor says he will do well, and that makes me anxious about him. However, we shall see. It was reported that several men had been washed overboard, but, happily, that is not true."

"At any rate we have resumed our course," I said.

"Yes," replied the doctor, "the westerly, round against wind and sea, that is very evident." As he spoke he clutched a cleat to prevent himself from falling. "Do you know, my dear sir," he continued, "what I should do with the *Great Eastern* if she belonged to me? No! Very well, I would make her a true pleasure-boat, and charge 10,000 francs a head for a berth. I would have only 'swells' on board, who could afford to take it easy. I would take a month or six weeks to cross the Atlantic. I would never run in a cross-sea. The wind should always be astern, or right ahead, but no rolling or

pitching. My passengers should be assured against seasickness, and I would pay £100 for every case."

"That is a practical idea," I replied.

"Yes," answered Pitferge, "there is money to be made out of it—or lost!"

Meantime the *Great Eastern* continued her course under easy steam, with five or six turns of the wheel occasionally, so as to hold her own. The swell was tremendous, but the bow cut the waves at right angles, and the *Great Eastern* shipped no more seas. It was no longer a mountain of metal opposing a mountain of water, but a rock receiving the blows of the waves.

Besides, the rain began to fall in torrents, and we were obliged to seek shelter under the companion-hatch. This shower caused a subsidence both of the wind and sea. The sky cleared in the west, and the last cumuli disappeared in the horizon opposite. At ten o'clock the hurricane sent us its last breath.

At mid-day the observation was taken pretty accurately, it was :

Lat. $41^{\circ} 50'$ N.

Long. $61^{\circ} 57'$ W.

Distance run, 193 miles.

This great diminution in the course run must be attributed to the tempest which had assailed us all night and during the morning—a storm so terrible that one of the passengers, a regular inhabitant of the Atlantic, who was now crossing it for the forty-fourth time—had never seen anything to equal it. The engineers even confessed that,

except in the storm in which the *Great Eastern* lay for three days in the trough of the sea, she had never encountered such weather. But it must be stated that even if this splendid vessel did steam slowly, if she did roll too heavily, she represented complete security at sea. She resisted like a solid block, owing to the perfect homogeneity of her construction, to the double hull and to her breadth of beam. Her power of resistance was absolutely determined.

But I must repeat that, however great her power of resistance might be, there was no necessity to oppose her unreasonably to such a tremendous sea. However big a ship may be, however powerful, it is not "disgraced" because she runs before the wind. A captain ought never to forget that human life is of more value than self-esteem. In any case obstinacy is dangerous, wilfulness is culpable, and a recent example of this was afforded by a deplorable catastrophe which happened to one of the trans-oceanic vessels proves that a captain should not persist in fighting against the sea, even when the ship belonging to a rival company is overhauling him.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MEANTIME the pumps continued to empty the "lake" which had been formed in the 'tween-decks of the *Great Eastern*, like a lagoon in the middle of an island. Being powerfully and rapidly moved by steam, they soon restored the water to the Atlantic. The rain had ceased and the wind freshened again ; the sky, swept by the late tempest, was clear. When night fell I still remained pacing the deck for some hours. The saloons poured a flood of light from the half-opened casements. As far as the eye could reach a luminous phosphorescence extended, streaked here and there by the sparkling wave-crests. The stars, reflected by the milky water, appeared and disappeared as if they were covered by fleeting clouds. The dark mantle of night spread far and near around us. The sound of the paddle-wheels rose up from forward, while underneath I could hear the clank of the rudder-chains.

As I returned towards the saloon I was surprised to see a crowd of spectators assembled there. Loud plaudits rose, for notwithstanding the disasters of the day

the usual "entertainment" was proceeding. No one gave a thought to the wounded, perhaps dying sailor. The entertainment appeared to be good, and the passengers hailed with delight the appearance of a *troupe* of "minstrels" on the boards of the *Great Eastern*. Everyone knew these travelling minstrels, black or blackened according to their nature, who perambulate English towns giving their burlesque concerts. On this occasion the performers were only sailors dressed up. They were clothed in old ragged garments, ornamented with sea-biscuits for buttons, opera-glasses made by fastening two bottles together, and their banjoes were catgut stretched on bladders. These performers were amusing too, and sung burlesque songs, and improvised a conversation plentifully mixed with puns and cock-and-bull stories. They were applauded to the echo, and they redoubled their efforts. At length, as a wind-up, one of them, as nimble as a monkey, danced a hornpipe, which brought the entertainment to a close.

But amusing as this performance was, it had not attracted all the passengers. A great number had repaired to the saloon forward, in which play was permitted. There they gambled mightily. Some were adding to the gains already acquired; the losers, as time was pressing, endeavoured to retrieve their ill-fortune by rash play. A tremendous hubbub emanated from this saloon. The voice of the "banker" was heard calling the stakes—the cries of the losers, the chink of money, the rustling of the paper dollars, all smote upon the ear. Then a pro-

found silence, for some bold *coup* had hushed the uproar; then, as soon as the result appeared, the tumult began again louder than before.

I was not in the habit of frequenting the "smoking-room." I have a horror of gambling. It is always a vulgar and often an unhealthy amusement. When a man has acquired a passion for gaming, it carries other vices with it, it never goes alone. Besides, the society of gamblers, necessarily a very mixed one, was never to my taste. Harry Drake was here in his element, surrounded by his associates. Some adventurers, who were about to try their fortunes in America, were here "getting their hands in." I avoided all contact with this noisy set. So that evening I was passing the door when a storm of yells and curses arrested me. I listened, and, after a momentary pause, I believed I detected the voice of Fabian. What was he about in this place? Had he come to seek his enemy? Was the catastrophe hitherto avoided about to occur?

I pushed open the door at once. The uproar was at its height. I perceived Fabian standing up facing Harry Drake. I hurried towards my friend. Drake had evidently insulted him grossly, for Fabian's hand was raised, and he would have struck Drake in the face, had not Corsican, who suddenly appeared, prevented the blow.

But Fabian, addressing his adversary in a cold, biting-sarcastic tone, said: "You consider that blow inflicted!"

"Yes," replied Drake; "here is my card."

Thus Fate had, notwithstanding all our efforts to the contrary, brought these two mortal enemies face to face. It was too late to separate them. Things could only take their course now. Captain Corsican looked at me, and I fancied his eyes wore a look more of sadness than regret.

Fabian, meantime, had picked up the card which Drake had thrown upon the table. He held it between the tips of his fingers with disgust. Corsican was quite pale. My heart beat loudly. At length Fabian read the card he held. A kind of roar escaped him as he cried :

“ Harry Drake ! You ! *you* ! you ! ”

“ Even I, Captain MacElwin,” replied his rival calmly.

We had not been mistaken. If Fabian had been hitherto ignorant of Drake's name, Drake was only too well acquainted with the fact of Fabian's presence on board the *Great Eastern*.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AT daybreak next morning I went in search of Captain Corsican, and discovered him in the grand saloon. He had been with Fabian all night. The latter was still under the influence of the terrible emotion to which the discovery of the presence of Ellen's husband had given rise. Had some intuition revealed to him that Drake was not alone on board? Had the presence of Ellen been revealed to him by the presence of the man? Had he guessed at last that the poor mad creature was the same young girl whom he had loved many years ago? Corsican could not tell me, for Fabian had not spoken during the whole night.

Corsican entertained a true brotherly feeling for Fabian. From his youth his bold nature had attracted him. He was in despair.

"I interfered too late," he said. "I ought to have knocked the fellow down before Fabian had raised his hand."

"It would have been useless violence," I replied.

"Harry Drake would not have followed your lead to a quarrel. His business is with Fabian, and a catastrophe had become inevitable."

"You are right," said the captain. "The rascal has gained his point. He knew Fabian, his past life, all his love! Perhaps Ellen in her madness had revealed her secret thoughts. Or, more likely, Drake had heard from the true-hearted girl, even before his marriage, all details concerning her past life with which he had been unacquainted. Impelled by his low instinct, and finding himself in contact with Fabian, he has sought this affair, and managed to put himself in the light of the offended party. The 'cad' ought to be an accomplished duellist."

"Yes," I replied; "he has already had two or three unfortunate affairs of that kind."

"My dear sir, it is not the duel that I fear for Fabian," replied Corsican. "Captain MacElwin is one of those men who never trouble themselves to think of danger. It is the consequence of the encounter that I am afraid of. If Fabian kill this fellow, villain though he be, he will place an insurmountable obstacle between himself and Ellen, and, goodness knows, the unfortunate woman needs the assistance that Fabian could afford her."

"But to speak truth," said I, "in spite of all that, we cannot but hope for one ending to this for Ellen's and Fabian's sakes—that Drake may fall. Justice is on our side."

"Certainly," replied the captain ; "but I can tremble for the survivors, and I am much upset to think that, even at the risk of my life, I did not prevent this encounter."

"Captain," I said, taking the hand of this devoted friend, "we have not yet had a visit from Drake's seconds. So, although circumstances bear you out, I do not yet despair."

"Do you know any means by which the affair may be prevented?"

"None at present. In any case, if the duel do take place, it can, I fancy, only be fought in America, and perhaps before our arrival the Fate that has brought it about may avert further consequences."

Captain Corsican shook his head as one who did not admit the efficacy of chance in human affairs.

At that moment Fabian ascended to the deck. I only caught a glimpse of him for an instant. The pallor of his visage struck me. The scarce-healed wound had been re-opened in his heart. He was a piteous sight.

We followed him. He wandered aimlessly about, invoking the unhappy soul already half dead to the world, and did all he could to avoid us.

Friendship may be burdensome at times, so Corsican and I thought it would be better to respect such sorrow, and not to interfere. But Fabian suddenly approached us and said :

"What mad woman is she? She is Ellen, is she not? Poor Ellen!"

He still doubted, and went away without waiting for an answer, which, indeed, we had not the courage to give.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AT mid-day I had not yet heard that Drake had sent his seconds to Fabian. But these were preliminaries which should have been insisted on if Drake had made up his mind to demand satisfaction at once. Might we not consider this delay as hopeful? I was well aware that the Saxon race look upon a point of honour in a different manner to Frenchmen, and that duelling has almost entirely disappeared from the British code. As I have already said, not only is the law severe against duellists, and they cannot behave as they do in France, but public opinion is strongly against them. However, the present was a peculiar case; the affair had evidently been sought voluntarily. The insulted party had, so to speak, provoked the insulter, and I always came to the same conclusion—viz., that Fabian and Harry Drake must fight.

Now the deck was crowded with promenaders. The faithful were returning from "church." Officers, sailors, and passengers regained their stations and their cabins.

At half-past twelve the usual "observation" was affixed as follows :

Lat. $40^{\circ} 33'$ N.

Long. $66^{\circ} 21'$ W.

Distance run, 214 miles.

The *Great Eastern* was now only 348 miles from Sandy Hook, the point at the entrance of New York passage. We ought soon to be in American waters.

I did not notice Fabian in his accustomed seat at luncheon, but Drake was in his usual place. He was talkative enough, but appeared ill at ease. Whether he sought to drown his fears in wine, I cannot say, but he had recourse to frequent libations with his associates. He looked at me frequently "under his eyes," not daring to regard me openly, notwithstanding his effrontery. Perhaps he was seeking Fabian amongst those at table. But I noticed that he quitted the table suddenly before the conclusion of the meal. I rose to observe his movements, but he gained his cabin, and shut himself in.

I ascended to the deck. The sea was quite calm, the sky clear. Not a wave nor a cloud to be seen. The two mirrors mutually reflected each other in their azure depths. Doctor Pitferge, whom I met, gave me very bad news respecting the wounded sailor, who was getting worse, and notwithstanding the ship-doctor's opinion, the invalid's recovery was very problematical.

At four o'clock, just before dinner, a ship was signalled to larboard. The first officer informed me that

she was the *City of Paris*, 2,750 tons, one of the finest of the Inman line of steamers. But he was wrong. She proved to be the *Saxonia*, belonging to the National Steam Ship Company. For a few minutes the two vessels were broadside on to each other at about three cables' length. The deck of the *Saxonia* was crowded with passengers, who saluted us with three cheers.

At five o'clock we sighted another ship, but she was too far off for her nationality to be distinguished. This was doubtless the *City of Paris*. There was a great attraction in these meetings of ships, these denizens of the Atlantic, who saluted each other as they passed. One can understand that there one ship is never indifferent to another. A common danger of the sea is a bond of union even amongst strangers.

At six o'clock a third ship, the *Philadelphia*, of the Inman line, appeared. She was used for the emigrant service between Liverpool and New York. There was no question about our now being in frequented seas, and land could not be far distant. I was longing to reach it.

We also expected to see the *Europe*, a paddle-wheel steamer of 3,200 tons, and 1,300 horse-power. This vessel belonged to the Compagnie Transatlantique, and performed the service between Havre and New York, but she was not signalled. She had most probably gone farther north.

Night fell at half-past seven. The crescent moon rose up with the last beams of the setting sun, and remained for some time suspended in the horizon. A

prayer-meeting, held by Captain Anderson, and interspersed with hymns, lasted until nine o'clock.

The whole day had passed, and neither Captain Corsican or myself had received a visit from Harry Drake's seconds.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE next day, Monday, April 8th, was a beautiful day. The sun shone as soon as he rose. On the bridge I met Doctor Pitferge, who was enjoying the sunshine. He approached me.

"Ah well!" he said, "our poor wounded man has died during the night. The doctors said he would recover. Oh, those doctors! They never give anything up. This is the fourth shipmate we have lost since we left Liverpool—the fourth carried to the debit of the *Great Eastern*, and the voyage is not yet over."

"Poor fellow!" I exclaimed, "just as we were nearing port too, in sight of the American coast. What will become of his wife and little ones?"

"What can you expect, my dear sir?" replied the doctor. "It is the law—the great law. We must all die. We must make way for those who will surely succeed us. In my opinion we only do die because we occupy a place to which another has a right. Now can you tell me how many people will die during the rest of my existence, supposing I live to be sixty years old?"

"I have not any idea," I replied.

"The calculation is easy enough," replied Pitferge. "If I live to be sixty I shall have lived 21,900 days, that is 525,600 hours, or 31,536,000 minutes, in fact 1,892,160,000 seconds. In round numbers, 200,000,000 seconds. Now, during that time 2,000,000,000 of individuals who have made themselves obnoxious to their successors will have died, and I, in my turn, shall have to depart when I become inconvenient. So the great point is not to become troublesome as long as you can help it!"

The doctor continued this style of argument for a long time, endeavouring to prove to me a very simple thing—that we are all mortal! I did not care to discuss the question, and let him talk. We walked up and down—he chatting, I listening, and I noticed that the carpenters were busy repairing the injuries inflicted by the heavy seas. If Captain Anderson did not wish to enter New York Harbour showing damages, the workmen would have to make haste; for the vessel was going along very fast in that calm water, and I do not think she had ever steamed so rapidly before. I was made aware of this by the evident enjoyment of the engaged couple, who, leaning on the balustrade, no longer counted the turns of the wheels. The long pistons worked rapidly, and the enormous oscillating cylinders looked like the machinery of a great peal of bells in full swing. The paddles gave eleven revolutions in a minute, and the *Great Eastern* was going thirteen knots.

At noon the officers dispensed with the usual observation. They knew their situation by reckoning, and land would be signalled soon.

As I was taking a turn on deck after luncheon, Captain Corsican joined me. He had something particular to say, as I guessed from the expression of his face.

"Fabian has had a visit from Drake's seconds," he said. "He has asked me to be his second, and I have come to ask if you will be my assistant in this business. He can count upon you, I am sure."

"Yes, captain. Then all hope to prevent or put off this encounter has failed?"

"Entirely."

"But tell me—how did this quarrel originate?"

"Some dispute at play—merely a pretext. In fact, Fabian did not recognise this fellow Drake, but Drake knew Fabian. The very name of Fabian is gall to him, and he longs to slay the man who bears it."

"Who are Drake's seconds?" I asked.

"One," replied Corsican, "is an actor——"

"Doctor T——!"

"Precisely. The other is a Yankee whom I do not know."

"When will they wait upon you?"

"I am waiting for them at this moment."

Almost immediately the other parties appeared, and came toward us. Doctor T—— cleared his throat as he came along. He appeared to think himself a very great

man—possibly because he was the representative of a scoundrel. His companion, an associate of Drake's, also was one of those eclectic merchants who have always for sale the very thing, however extraordinary, that you want to purchase.

Doctor T—— having saluted us formally—a salute to which Corsican vouchsafed a very small recognition—took up his parable thus :

“Gentlemen,” said he, in solemn voice, “our friend Drake, a gentleman whose worth and manner everyone appreciates, has sent us to treat with you upon a very delicate matter. Captain MacElwin, to whom we were at first delegated, has referred us to you, as his representatives in this business. I think, therefore, that we shall readily come to an understanding, as behoves gentlemen, upon the delicate points of our mission.”

We made no reply, and left this personage to flounder in his “delicacy.”

“Gentlemen,” he resumed, “there can be no doubt that the fault is on the part of Captain MacElwin. That gentleman, without reason or excuse, has thought proper to question the honourable dealing of Mr. Harry Drake at play. Then, without any provocation, he insulted him in the grossest manner.”

All this “butter-and-honey” made Corsican impatient. He bit his moustache, but could refrain no longer.

“Come to facts,” he said brusquely to Doctor T——, whose speech he cut short. “No more words. This matter is very simple. Captain MacElwin threatened to

strike Mr. Drake. Your friend accepted the blow as received. He is the offended party, and seeks satisfaction. He has the choice of weapons. Now——”

“Captain MacElwin accepts the challenge, then?” said Doctor T——, rather upset by Corsican’s manner.

“Certainly.”

“Our friend Drake chooses the sword.”

“Very well. Where shall the meeting take place? At New York?”

“No ; here, on board.”

“On board be it, if you prefer it so. When? To-morrow morning?”

“This evening, at six, behind the saloon deck, which will then be deserted.”

“Good.” And as he spoke, Corsican took my arm, and turned his back on Doctor T——.

CHAPTER XXX.

It was now impossible to prevent the affair. A few hours only intervened between the combatants. Why this precipitation? Why could not Drake wait until the disembarkation had been effected? This vessel, chartered by a French company, perhaps appeared to him a fitting spot for a duel to the death; or rather, Drake may have had some object in ridding himself of Fabian before the latter could set foot on the American continent, and find out that Ellen was on board, which Drake believed was a fact unknown to all but himself. Yes, that was the reason, no doubt.

"What does it matter, after all?" said the captain.
"Better settle the business at once."

"Shall I ask Dr. Pitferge to be present in his capacity as surgeon?" I said.

"Yes, it will be a good plan."

Corsican then left me to rejoin Fabian. The bell on the bridge began to toll at that moment, and I inquired what it meant. The helmsman informed me that it was tolling for the burial of the sailor who had died during

the night, and the ceremony was about to commence. The beautiful weather now seemed suddenly to become overcast ; great *cumuli* mounted upwards in the south.

As the bell continued to toll, the passengers came up in a crowd to starboard. The bridges, paddle-boxes, bulwarks, nettings, and the boats, were filled with spectators. The officers, sailors, and engineers not on duty ranged themselves on deck.

At two o'clock a group of sailors appeared at the end of the upper deck. This party were leaving the "sick bay," and now passed before the rudder machinery. The body of the sailor, carried by four men, was sewn in canvas and had a shot fastened to the feet. The English ensign covered the body. The bearers, followed by the messmates of the deceased, advanced slowly in the midst of the spectators, who gave way as they approached.

Arrived at a point abaft the starboard paddle-box, the procession halted, and the body was deposited upon a grating on deck, near the accommodation-ladder.

In front of the line of spectators ranged on the paddle-box, stood Captain Anderson and his officers in full uniform. The captain held a prayer-book in his hand. He took off his cap, and for some minutes, in the midst of an impressive silence, which was not even interrupted by the sighing of the wind, he read in a solemn tone the service for the burial of the dead. In that heavy, lowering atmosphere, without a sound or a stir of Nature, every word was distinctly audible. Some of the passengers repeated the responses in low tones.

At a sign from the captain, the body, tilted up by the bearers, glided into the sea. For an instant it floated, then standing upright it disappeared in a circle of foam.

At that moment the voice of the look-out man was heard crying :

“Land, ho !”

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE land announced at the moment the water was closing over the corpse of the unfortunate sailor was low and yellow. That low sandy line was Long Island, the great bank of sand rescued by vegetation which covers the American coast from Montauk Point to Brooklyn, the suburb of New York. Numbers of yachts were sailing around this island, which is studded with villas and summer residences, the favourite country retreat of the New Yorkists.

Every one of the passengers waved a salute to the long-wished-for land, after such a protracted voyage, which had not been exempt from danger. Every glass was fixed upon the first spur of the American continent, and each passenger saw it with different feelings, according to his regret or his hopes. The Yankees welcomed it as their mother country, the Southerners looked upon this Northern land with scorn, the disdain of the conquered for the conqueror.

The Canadians looked upon it as men who have only a step between them and the Union. The Californians

looked ahead over all the plains of the Far West, and crossing the Rocky Mountains in spirit, fancied their feet already pressing upon the inexhaustible "diggins." The Mormons, with haughty brow and curling lip, scarcely noted the appearance of the continent, and looked farther afield to the almost inaccessible desert to the City of the Saints. As for the young lovers, America was the Promised Land to them.

But all this time the sky was getting more lowering. The horizon towards the south was clear, the heavy clouds were approaching from the zenith. The heaviness of the atmosphere was becoming intolerable, and the heat was as suffocating as in the heated July air. Shall we never have finished the adventures of this interminable voyage?

"Should you like me to astonish you?" said Doctor Pitferge, as he rejoined me on the bridge.

"Astonish me, doctor?" I exclaimed.

"Well, then, we shall have a thunderstorm, perhaps tempest, before the day is over."

"A thunderstorm in April!" I cried.

"The *Great Eastern* is no respecter of seasons," replied Dean Pitferge, shrugging his shoulders. "This is a thunderstorm expressly got up for the occasion. Look at those threatening clouds stretching across the sky. They look like animals of the geological epoch, and very soon they will have devoured each other."

"I must confess," I said, "that the sky is menacing. The appearance is decidedly stormy; and were it three

months later, I should have been of your opinion, my dear doctor ; but just now—I cannot agree with you.”

“I tell you,” replied Pitferge, “that the storm will burst ere long. I can feel it like a storm-glass. Just look at those clouds massing themselves together. Observe the *cirrus*—those mares’-tails which are mingling into one—and the thick circular clouds upon the horizon. There will soon be a rapid condensation of vapour, and a consequent production of electricity. Besides, the barometer has fallen suddenly, and the prevailing wind is south-west, the only quarter which brings up a storm in the winter.”

“You may be quite right, doctor,” I replied, not willing to give in ; “but who has ever experienced thunderstorms at this time of year in this latitude ?”

“They can be quoted, sir, as annual occurrences. The mild winters are often marked by the occurrence of storms. Had you lived in 1172, or even in 1824, you would have heard thunder in February on the first occasion, and during December on the second. In 1837, in January, a thunderbolt fell near Drammen, in Norway, and did great damage ; and last year, in the Channel, in the month of February, fishing-boats from Tréport were struck by lightning. Had I only time to consult statistics, I could overwhelm you.”

“Well, doctor, since you will insist—— We shall soon see, however. You are not afraid of thunder, at least ?”

"I?" replied the doctor. "Thunder is my best friend; better, indeed—it is my physician."

"Your physician!"

"Certainly; inasmuch as I was struck by lightning, in bed, on the 13th July, 1867, at Kew, near London; and the electric fluid cured me of paralysis of the right arm, which had resisted all the skill of the faculty."

"You are surely joking!"

"By no means. It is an economical treatment—a treatment by electricity. My dear sir, there are other well-authenticated facts, which prove that lightning can beat the most skilful doctors, and its intervention is truly marvellous in cases considered desperate."

"All the same," I said. "I should have little faith in your doctor, and I should not call him to a consultation of my own free will."

"Because you have never seen his practice. Look here! an example just occurs to me. In 1817, in Connecticut, a peasant, who suffered from an asthma, considered incurable, was struck by lightning in his field, and quite cured. A breast-stroke that!"

In fact, the doctor was capable of rolling thunder into pills, I verily believe.

"Laugh away, ignoramus," he said; "laugh away. You are most certainly ignorant both as regards the weather and medicine."

CHAPTER XXXII.

AFTER Dean Pitferge left me, I remained on the bridge watching the storm. Fabian was still in his cabin, and Corsican was with him. The former, no doubt, was making his arrangements in the event of accident. It then occurred to me that he had a sister in New York, and I shuddered at the thought that we should bear to her the corpse only of the brother for whom she was so anxiously waiting. I wished to see Fabian very much, but thought it better not to trouble him nor Captain Corsican just then.

At four o'clock we were able to distinguish a line of land extending in front of Long Island. This was Fire Island, in the centre of which was a lighthouse. The passengers now began to mount to the bridge and the upper decks. All eyes were turned towards the coast, now about six miles distant to the north. We were anxiously awaiting the arrival of the pilot to settle the question of the "pool." It was understood that the holders of the night-hours' quarters—and I was of the

number—had abandoned their pretensions, and that the day quarters even, with the exception of those who held tickets for quarters between four and six o'clock, had no chance either. Before nightfall the pilot would arrive, and the suspense be terminated.

All interest was therefore concentrated upon the seven or eight people to whom fate had given the next few quarters, and they took advantage of this to sell, buy, and re-sell their chances with a zest worthy of the London Stock Exchange.

At sixteen minutes past four the pilot cutter was signalled. He would be on board in fourteen or fifteen minutes at most. The contest was now between the second and third quarter, counted between four and five o'clock P.M. Immediately demands and offers were made with renewed excitement. Insane bets were made, even upon the personal appearance of the pilot. The following are true specimens :

“Ten dollars the pilot is married.”

“Twenty dollars that he is a widower.”

“Thirty dollars that he wears a moustache.”

“Fifty that he has red whiskers.”

“Sixty dollars that he has a wart on his nose.”

“One hundred that he puts his right foot on deck first.”

“He will be smoking.”

“He will have a pipe in his mouth.”

“No, a cigar.”

“No! Yes! No!”

And twenty other wagers as absurd found even more absurd takers.

Meantime the cutter, close-hauled on the starboard tack, was rapidly approaching the *Great Eastern*. We could distinguish her graceful lines, rising somewhat forward, and her long hull gave her the appearance of a pleasure yacht. First-rate boats these pilot-cutters, of fifty or sixty tons, and built to stand the sea, rising to the waves like a sea-bird. Such vessels could sail round the world, and the caravels of Magellan could not beat them. This cutter, heeling over gracefully, still "carried on," notwithstanding the freshening breeze. Her spars and staysails stood out in relief against the dark sky. The water foamed beneath her counter. When she got within two cables' length of the *Great Eastern*, she brought up in the wind, and launched a boat. Captain Anderson stopped the engines, and, for the first time for fourteen days, the paddles and screw were silent. A man descended from the cutter to the boat. Four sailors pulled her to the steamer. A rope-ladder was hove over the side of the monster to the pilot in his little cockle-shell below. He seized the ladder, ascended nimbly, and jumped on deck.

Then arose the joyful cries of the winners, the lamentations of the losers. The pool was decided under the following conditions :

The pilot was married.

He had no wart on his nose.

He wore a fair moustache.

He had jumped on board with both feet.

Finally, it was twenty-six minutes past four, to a second, when he boarded the *Great Eastern*.

So the owner of the twenty-third quarter of an hour gained the ninety-six dollars. The winner was Captain Corsican, who was perfectly indifferent to this unexpected good fortune. He soon appeared on deck ; and when he was presented with the pool, he begged Captain Anderson to retain it for the benefit of the widow of the young sailor who had been fatally injured on board. The captain silently pressed his hand. Soon afterwards a sailor came in search of Corsican, and, saluting him, said brusquely : " Sir, my messmates have sent me to tell you that you are a ' gentleman.' They all thank you in the name of poor Wilson, who cannot thank you himself." Captain Corsican pressed the honest fellow's hand for all reply.

The pilot was a short man, and not much of a sailor to look at. He wore an oilskin-covered cap, black trousers, a brown overcoat lined with red, and he carried an umbrella. He was now the master on board.

As he leaped on deck, and before ascending to the bridge, he had thrown a sheaf of newspapers amongst the passengers, who eagerly seized them. These were the political and civil cords which bound the *Great Eastern* to the two continents.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE storm was brewing, and the strife of the elements would soon commence. A thick mass of cloud of an uniform tint spread itself overhead like piles of cotton. Nature was evidently bent upon verifying Doctor Pitferge's prognostications. The *Great Eastern* steamed more and more slowly, the wheels only giving three or four turns in the minute. The white volumes of steam escaped from the valves. The anchor-chains were cleared. The British ensign was floating at the peak. Captain Anderson had made all his preparations for coming to an anchor. From the starboard paddle-box the pilot guided, by gestures, the *Great Eastern* through the narrow channels ; but the ebb had already set in, and the *Great Eastern* could not cross the bar at the mouth of the Hudson. We were, therefore, obliged to wait in the open sea until next day. Still another day !

At a quarter to five the anchors were let go. The chain-cables ran through the hawse-holes with a noise like thunder ; indeed, for the moment, I fancied that the

storm had commenced. As soon as the anchors "bit" the vessel swung and remained steady. Not a movement disturbed the water. The *Great Eastern* was simply an island.

Just then the steward's trumpet summoned us to our farewell dinner on board. The Society would be liberal with their champagne on this occasion, and no one would absent himself. Fifteen minutes later the saloons were crowded with guests and the decks deserted.

But there were seven persons who left their places unoccupied—the two intending combatants, the four seconds in the duel, and the doctor. The time and place of the encounter had been well chosen. Nobody was on deck, the passengers had all descended to the dining-rooms, the sailors at their posts, the officers in their own mess-room. No one was at the wheel abaft, as the ship was at anchor.

At ten minutes past five the doctor and I were joined by Fabian and Captain Corsican. I had not seen Fabian since the scene at the gambling-table. He appeared sad but collected, and not at all disturbed by the prospect of the duel. His thoughts were elsewhere, and his restless gaze sought for Ellen continually. He pressed my hand without uttering a word.

"Harry Drake has not yet put in an appearance?" asked Captain Corsican.

"Not yet," I replied.

"Let us go astern—that is the appointed place."

Fabian, Corsican, and I then proceeded along the

upper-deck. The sky was growing darker. Heavy thunder began to growl in the distance. It was a sort of "bass" accompaniment to the "hip-hipping" and cheering that emanated from the saloon. Occasional flashes of lightning darted from the black clouds. The atmosphere was surcharged with electricity.

At twenty minutes past five Drake and his seconds arrived. They saluted us, and their salute was formally returned. Drake did not speak, but his face betrayed ill-concealed excitement. He regarded Fabian with a glance of hatred; the latter, leaning against the companion-hatch, did not even look at him. Fabian was lost in a reverie, and appeared to have no concern in the drama about to be acted.

Meanwhile, Captain Corsican, addressing the Yankee, one of Drake's seconds, requested the swords. The latter gave them to him. They were broadswords, the basket-hilts of which protected the hand completely. Corsican took them, bent them, and having measured them, presented them to the Yankee to take his choice. While these preliminaries were taking place, Drake took off his hat and coat, unfastened his shirt, and rolled up his sleeves. Then he seized his sword. I saw that he was left-handed, an immense advantage for him, accustomed to fight with right-handed adversaries.

Fabian had not yet left his place. One would have fancied that these preparations did not concern him in the least. Corsican advanced, touched his arm, and presented him with the sword. Fabian looked at the

glittering blade, and all of a sudden his memory seemed to return.

He grasped the weapon with a firm hand.

"That's right," he muttered. "I remember!"

He then placed himself opposite Drake, who also at once assumed his guard. In the confined space, to "break" seemed impossible; whichever of the combatants was forced to the bulwarks would be in a tight place. They must fight as they stood.

"Proceed, gentlemen," said Corsican.

The swords immediately crossed. Almost immediately, some rapid exchanges, followed by some thrusts and parries, which showed us that the combatants were pretty equally matched. I augured well for Fabian: he was cool and self-possessed, unmoved—almost indifferent; certainly more indifferent to the combat than his seconds. Drake, on the contrary, regarded him with flashing eyes, his clenched teeth displayed themselves between his parted lips, his head was drawn down between his shoulders, and his face bore all the traces of a violent hate which deprived him of his *sangfroid*. He had come there to kill, and kill he would.

After the first engagement, which lasted some minutes, the adversaries lowered their swords. Neither had been wounded. A slight scratch showed itself on Fabian's arm. Drake and he rested, while the former wiped the perspiration from his face.

The storm now burst forth furiously. The roll of the thunder never ceased, and occasionally broke into loud

crashes. So vivid was the lightning, that the swords appeared crested by it, like conductors in the midst of a storm-cloud. After a rest of a few moments, Captain Corsican again gave the signal, and Fabian and Drake placed themselves in guard.

This encounter was more lively than the preceding. Fabian defended himself with astonishing calmness. Drake attacked furiously. Frequently, after a furious thrust from Drake, I expected a return from Fabian, but he did not attempt it.

Suddenly, under a disengagement in tierce, Drake lunged. I thought Fabian was hit in the chest; but, with a low parry in quint, he struck Drake's weapon sharply. The latter, recovering, protected himself by a rapid semicircle, while the lightning rent the clouds overhead.

Fabian had now an opening, but he did not take it, and permitted his opponent time to collect himself. I confess this magnanimity was not to my taste. Drake was not one of those with whom it is advisable to play tricks.

Suddenly, and without any apparent explanation for such conduct, Fabian let his sword fall. Had he been mortally wounded, without our suspecting it? My blood coursed back to my heart.

But Fabian's look had grown singularly animated. "Defend yourself!" shouted Drake angrily, drawing himself up, and ready to spring upon his adversary.

I thought that Fabian was "done for," disarmed as

he was. Corsican was about to throw himself between him and his enemy, so as to prevent him striking a defenceless man ; but Drake, stupefied, stood now motionless in his turn !

I turned round. There, pale as a ghost, with outstretched arms, Ellen was advancing towards the combatants. Fabian opened his arms, but, fascinated by the apparition, did not move.

“ You ! ” cried Drake to Ellen ; “ you here ! ”

His sword trembled, with its fiery point uplifted. It might have been the blade of the Archangel Michael in the hand of the demon.

Suddenly a bright flash of lightning wrapped the vessel, from stem to stern, in a perfect blaze. I was overturned, and felt suffocating. The thunder and lightning broke together. An odour of sulphur was perceptible.

By a great effort I raised myself. I regained my senses. I had fallen upon one knee. I got up and looked around. Ellen was being supported by Fabian. Drake, petrified, was standing in the same position, but his face had turned black !

Had the unhappy man attracted the lightning with his blade and been struck ?

Ellen left Fabian's side and approached Drake, her look full of heavenly compassion. She placed her hand on his shoulder. Even this slight touch was sufficient to disturb the equilibrium. The body of Drake fell to the ground lifeless.

Ellen bent over the corpse, but we recoiled in terror. The unhappy Harry Drake was dead.

“Struck by lightning,” said the doctor, grasping my arm. “Struck by lightning! Ah! do you not now believe in the intervention of thunder?”

Had Drake really been killed by lightning, as Pitferge affirmed, or rather, as stated subsequently by the ship’s doctor, had a blood-vessel been ruptured in the heart? I cannot decide. At any rate we had only a dead body before our eyes.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

NEXT day, Tuesday, 9th April, at eleven o'clock, the *Great Eastern* weighed anchor and got ready to enter the Hudson River. The pilot worked the ship with unerring eye. The thunderstorm had cleared off during the night. The last clouds were disappearing below the horizon. The sea was enlivened by a fleet of yachts sailing along the coast.

About half-past eleven the quarantine boat arrived. This was a small steamer carrying the sanitary committee of New York. Fitted with a "beam" engine which raised itself above the deck, the steamer went at a great rate, and gave me a specimen of these little American tenders, by a number of which we were soon surrounded.

We had soon passed the lightship, the floating light which marks the channels of the Hudson. The long sandy point, Sandy Hook, terminated by a lighthouse, lay close alongside, and there groups of spectators greeted us with cheers.

When the *Great Eastern* had entered the bay formed

by the point of Sandy Hook, and amidst a fleet of fishing smacks, I could perceive the green heights of New Jersey, the enormous forts dominating the bay, then the low line of the extensive city stretching between the Hudson and the East River as Lyons is between the Rhône and the Saône.

At one o'clock, having ranged broadside on to the New York quays, the *Great Eastern* came to her moorings in the Hudson, and the anchors fouled the telegraph cables of the river, which must be broken at her departure.

Then the disembarkation of all the passengers began, the departure of our compatriots of a voyage whom I never was to meet again, probably—Californians, Southerners, Mormons, the *fiancés*. I waited for Fabian and Corsican.

I had been compelled to make Captain Anderson acquainted with the circumstances of the duel which had taken place. The doctors made their report. The law taking no cognizance of the death of Drake, the last honours were ordered to be paid to him on shore.

Just then Cockburn, the statistician, who had not spoken during the voyage, approached me, and said :

“Do you know, sir, how many turns the wheels have made during the voyage?”

“No, sir,” I replied.

“One hundred thousand seven hundred and twenty-three.”

“Indeed! And the screw, if you please?”

"Six hundred and eight thousand one hundred and thirty."

"I am much obliged to you, sir," I replied.

And Cockburn left me without any farewell whatever.

Fabian and Corsican now joined me. Fabian pressed my hand effusively.

"Ellen will recover," he cried. "Her reason has already returned for a moment. Ah! Heaven is merciful, and will restore her to us again."

Fabian, as he spoke, smiled as he gazed into the future. Captain Corsican embraced me, without any ceremony, almost rudely.

"*Au revoir! au revoir!*" he cried, when he had taken his place on board the tender on which Fabian and Ellen, under the protection of Mrs. R——, the sister of Captain MacElwin, had already embarked.

The tender cast off, carrying the first instalment of passengers to the Custom-house Pier.

I watched her receding hull. I had now no doubt that, under the watchful care and affection of Fabian and his sister, Ellen would be restored to reason, of which grief had deprived her.

As I gazed, someone seized my arm. It was Dean Pitferge.

"Well," he said, "and what are you going to do?"

"Faith, doctor, since the *Great Eastern* is going to remain 192 hours here, and as I must go back in her, I have 192 hours to spend in America. That only gives me eight days; but eight days, well employed, is sufficient

to see New York, the Hudson, the Valley of the Mohawk, Lake Erie, Niagara, and all that portion of the land celebrated by Cooper."

"Ah ! so you are going to Niagara ?" cried Pitferge. "I shall not be sorry to see it again ; and if I shall not be intruding——"

The worthy doctor amused me by his crotchets. He interested me. He was a ready-made guide, and a well-instructed one to boot.

"Book that," I said. A quarter of an hour later we left the ship, and at three o'clock, having traversed Broadway, we were settled in our rooms in the Fifth Avenue Hotel, New York.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A WEEK to spend in America ! The *Great Eastern* was to leave on the 16th, and it was on the 9th April, at 3 P.M., that I landed on American soil. A week ! There are some rapid tourists, "express travellers," who would manage to "do" the whole of America in that time. I had no such pretensions, not even to visit New York seriously, and after this rapid examination go and write a book upon the manners and customs of the American people. But in its constitution and physical aspects New York is very quickly seen. It has no more variety than a chess-board. The streets, which intersect at right angles, are denominated "avenues" when they are longitudinal, and "streets" when they are transversal. The numbering of these roads is a very practical but very monotonous disposition of things ; omnibuses traverse all the avenues. When you have seen one quarter of New York you have seen the entire city, except, perhaps, the "muddle" of streets and alleys at the southern extremity, where the commercial population dwells.

New York is a tongue of land, and all its business is

transacted at the tip of the tongue. On one side is the Hudson, and on the other the East River, two arms of the sea, in fact, covered with vessels, and across which ferry-boats ply between New York and Brooklyn on the right, and to New Jersey on the left. A single artery obliquely intersects the symmetrical agglomeration of the quarters of New York, and carries life into them. This is the old Broadway, like the Strand in London, or the Boulevard Montmartre in Paris, almost impassable at the lower end, where the crowd is thick, and almost deserted at the upper end. A street wherein marble palaces and shanties are mingled, a river of carriages, omnibuses, cabs, waggons, and drays, with pavements for its banks, and over which it has been found necessary to throw bridges to afford crossing to the foot-passengers. Broadway is New York, and Doctor Pitferge and I walked there until evening.

After dinner at the hotel, where they served us with Lilliputian stews upon dolls' plates, I finished the evening at Barnum's Theatre. Here they were playing a drama called the "Streets of New York." In the fourth act there is a fire and a real fire-engine with real fire-brigade men ! This is the great attraction.

Next morning I left the doctor to see to his business. We were to meet again at two o'clock. I went to 51, Liberty Street, to the post-office, for my correspondence, and then to No. 2, Bowling Green, to the house of the French consul, M. le Baron Gauldrée, who welcomed me very kindly ; then to the Hoffmans' bank,

where I cashed a draft, and at last to No. 25, Thirty-sixth Street, to Mrs. R——'s house. I longed to have some news of Ellen and my two friends. But there I heard that, acting under the doctor's advice, Mrs. R——, Fabian, and Corsican had left New York, taking the young lady with them, in order that country air and quiet might use all their influence to restore her to health.

A message from Corsican had prepared me for this sudden departure. The captain had been to the Fifth Avenue Hotel and had missed me. Whither had he and his friends gone when they quitted New York? Not very far. They proposed to stop at the first place that pleased Ellen, and to remain there so long as she was pleased to stay. Corsican would keep me posted up in their movements, and he hoped that I would not leave without seeing them again. Yes, indeed, and were it only for a few hours I should be very glad to see them all again. But here was the drawback of travelling, pressed for time as I was; they had gone and I was on the eve of departure, each his own way, so it was impossible to count upon meeting again.

At two o'clock I returned to the hotel. I found the doctor in the bar-room, crowded like the "Bourse," or a market—a regular public hall where travellers and occasional visitors mingle, and where all comers obtain iced water, biscuits, and cheese, gratis.

"Well, doctor," I said, "when do we start?"

"At six o'clock this evening."

"Shall we take the Hudson railroad?"

"No, the *St. John*, a splendid steamer, another world—a river *Great Eastern*—one of those admirable boats which really 'go ahead.' I should have preferred to ascend the Hudson by daylight, but the *St. John* goes only at night. To-morrow, at 5 A.M., we shall be at Albany. At six o'clock we take the New York Central Railroad, and in the evening we shall sup at Niagara Falls!"

I did not discuss the doctor's arrangements. I willingly accepted all blindfold. The "lift" soon landed us at our rooms, and soon afterwards we descended with our bags. A cab at twenty francs (four dollars fifty cents) the course, took us to the pier in fifteen minutes, where the *St. John* was already vomiting volumes of smoke.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE *St. John* and her sister ship, the *Dean Richmond*, were the best boats on the river. Rather houses than boats; they have two or three rows of terraces, with galleries, verandahs, and walking spaces. They were like floating gardeners' houses. The whole structure is dominated by twenty flag-staff struts, fastened by iron braces, which consolidate the entire fabric.

The two enormous paddle-boxes are painted in fresco, like the tympan of the Church of St. Mark at Venice. Behind each paddle-wheel rose a chimney from two furnaces, which are exteriorly placed, and not inside the vessel, a precaution in case of an explosion. In the centre, between the paddles, is the machinery of very simple construction: a single cylinder, a piston moving a large "beam," which rises and sinks like the immense hammer in a forge, and a single crank-shaft to communicate the movement to the wheels.

A large number of passengers had already embarked on board the *St. John*. Doctor Pitferge and I proceeded to take possession of a cabin, which opened from the

immense saloon, a sort of gallery of Diana, whose vaulted ceiling was supported upon Corinthian columns. All around was luxury and comfort—carpets, sofas, ottomans, objects of art, paintings, mirrors, and gas also, made on board !

Just then the vessel quivered, and began to move. I ascended to the upper terraces. At the bow rose a beautifully decorated house. This was the wheel-house. Four strong men were holding the spokes of the double wheel. After a few minutes' walking, I descended on the deck between the furnaces, already red, and from which little blue flames were escaping under the pressure of the air which the ventilators absorbed. I could see nothing of the Hudson. Night fell, and with night a fog thick enough to be cut with a knife. The *St. John* went snorting through the darkness like a formidable mastodon. We could scarcely descry the lights of the towns on the banks of the river, or the lamps of the steamers which were ascending the dark stream, whistling loudly.

At eight o'clock I entered the saloon. The doctor conducted me to supper in a magnificent restaurant, situated between decks, and served by an army of black servants. Pitferge said that there were more than 4,000 passengers on board, amongst whom were 1,500 emigrants stowed in the lower decks. Having finished supper, we retired to our comfortable cabins.

At eleven o'clock I was awakened by a sort of shock. The *St. John* had stopped. The captain not being able

to proceed, owing to the thickness of the night, had stopped. The enormous vessel was moored in the channel, and swung quietly at anchor.

At 4 A.M. we started again. I got up and went forward under one of the verandahs. The rain had ceased, the fog began to clear away. First, the water became visible, then the banks of the river; the right bank, clothed with green and shrubs, had something the appearance of a cemetery. At the back high hills bounded the view with a graceful curve. On the left bank, on the contrary, the land was flat and marshy. In the centre of the river, amongst the islets, were yachts getting under weigh with the morning breeze, and steamers stemming the rapid current of the Hudson.

Doctor Pitferge now joined me.

"Good morning, comrade," said he, after having inhaled a deep breath. "Do you know that in consequence of this cheerful fog we shall not arrive at Albany in time to catch the first train. That will make some alteration in our programme."

"So much the worse, doctor, for it is very necessary to make the most of our time."

"Quite so; but we shall be able to reach Niagara Falls at night instead of in the evening."

That would not be so convenient, but we could not help it.

As a matter of fact, the *St. John* did not reach Albany until nearly eight o'clock. The morning train had gone, so we had to wait for the train at 1.40 P.M. We had

thus an opportunity to visit this curious city, which is the legislative centre of the State of New York ; the lower town, commercial and populous, on the right bank of the Hudson ; the upper town, with brick houses, public buildings, and a very remarkable museum of fossils. One could imagine that one of the quarters of New York had been transported to the side of the hill, upon which it rises like an amphitheatre.

At one o'clock, having dined, we went to the railway station, an open terminus without barrier or officials. The train was waiting simply in the middle of the street, like an omnibus. People mounted into the long carriages when they pleased. These carriages are supported by four wheels at each end, and communicate with each other by bridges, which admit of the passengers walking from one extremity of the train to the other. At the hour named for our departure, without having seen guard or porter, without any bell ringing, without any notice, the smart locomotive, "as neat as ninepence"—a jewel of workmanship to place upon a stage for exhibition—started, and we proceeded at a rate of thirty-six miles an hour. But instead of being boxed up, as in continental railways, we were free to move about as we pleased, to purchase newspapers and books "unstamped." The "stamp" did not appear, I must confess, to have yet penetrated into the American customs ; no censor had thought in this country that it was necessary to watch with greater care the style of reading of people when seated in a railway carriage than those of people who

read by their firesides, seated in their easy-chairs. We could do all this without waiting to stop at stations. The ambulant drinking-bars and bookstalls all go with the travellers. The train crossed fields without palings, woods newly thinned, at the risk of collision with the felled timber ; through new cities, the streets of which were laid with rails, but to which towns houses were wanting still ; past cities baptised with the most poetical names in ancient history—Rome, Syracuse, Palmyra. In this manner passed before our eyes the Mohawk Valley—this land of Fenimore Cooper which belongs to that romancer as the land of Rob Roy did to Walter Scott. Lake Ontario glittered for an instant in the distance ; and there Cooper has fixed the scene of his greatest work. All this theatre of the grand epic of “heather-stocking,” formerly a wild country, now a civilised district. The doctor felt no exultation at this. He persisted in calling me Hawk-Eye, and would only answer to the appellation of Chingagook.

At eleven at night we changed carriages at Rochester, and passed the rapids of the Tennessee, which poured in cascades under the train. At two o'clock in the morning, having run beside the Niagara river for some miles without seeing it, we reached the village of Niagara Falls, and the doctor led the way to a magnificent hotel called “Cataract House.”

CHAPTER XXXVII.

NIAGARA is not a river, not even a stream—it is a simple weir, a natural trench, a canal thirty-six miles long, which carries the waters from Lakes Superior, Michigan, Huron, and Erie into Ontario. The difference in the level of these two last lakes is 340 feet ; this difference, if equally distributed throughout the whole course, would scarcely form a “rapid,” but the falls alone take more than half the height, hence their grandeur.

This Niagara canal divides the United States from Canada. The right bank is the American side, the left is British. On the one are policemen, on the other not even their shadow !

On the morning of the 12th April, at daybreak, the doctor and I descended the wide streets of Niagara Falls. This was the name of this little “watering-place,” reared upon the edge of the Falls, 300 miles from Albany. It enjoys salubrious air and a charming situation, with excellent hotels and comfortable villas, much frequented both by Yankees and Canadians during the summer.

The weather was just then splendid, the sun shone in

a clear cold sky. A dull distant roar broke upon the ear, and I could perceive on the horizon some vapour which was not cloud.

"Is that the fall?" I asked.

"Patience," replied Doctor Pitferge.

In a few minutes we had reached the bank of the river. The water was flowing calmly along, clear and not deep. Numerous points of grey rock rose up at intervals. The noise of the falls became more distinct, but we could not yet see them. A wooden bridge supported on iron girders connected the left bank with an island in the centre of the stream. The doctor led me to this bridge. Upwards the river extended as far as we could see; down stream, to our right, we could perceive the first symptoms of a rapid, then, at half a mile from the bridge, the land suddenly sunk away and clouds of spray were held in the air in suspension. This is from the American fall, which we could not see. Below it a peaceful country extended, a few little hills, houses, and some bare trees on the Canadian side.

"Don't look! Don't look!" cried Pitferge to me. "Wait, shut your eyes, and don't open them till I tell you!"

I scarcely heard him, I was looking. Having crossed the bridge, we stepped upon the island. This is Goat Island, a morsel of land about seventy acres in extent, covered with trees intersected by paths in which carriages can be driven, cast like a bouquet between the American and Canadian falls, which are 300 yards apart. We

hurried beneath these fine trees, we ascended the slopes and descended the steps. The thunder of the falls increased, clouds of spray rolled through the air.

“Now, look !” cried the doctor.

Rushing from a mass of rock, the Niagara appeared in all its splendour. At this spot it made a sudden turn, and curving to form the Horse-shoe, or Canadian Fall, it fell from a height of 158 feet, and with a breadth of two miles !

Nature has combined in this most lovely spot all that charms the eye. The turn of Niagara upon itself favours the effects of light and shade in a singular manner. The sun striking the waters at so many different angles changes their colours most capriciously, and those who have never witnessed this effect will scarcely credit it. Near Goat Island the foam is white, a pure snowy layer, a mass of molten silver falling into the void. In the centre of the cataract they are of a beautiful sea-green tint, which proves the depth of the water, for the *Detroit*, a ship drawing twenty feet of water, and launched into the current, descended the fall without “touching.” Towards the Canadian side, again, the foaming masses, like metal beneath the sun’s rays, shine brightly, and it is molten gold that now rushes down headlong. Beneath the fall the river is invisible ; the spray rises over it in thick masses. I could nevertheless perceive enormous ice-blocks, deposited by the frosts of winter, taking the form of monsters which, with extended jaws, hourly absorb hundreds of millions of tons of water poured

into them by the inexhausted Niagara. Half-a-mile below the Falls the river is smooth again, and presented a solid surface, which the winds of April had not yet been able to melt.

"Now let us go to the middle of the torrent!" said the doctor.

What did he mean by that? I did not know what to think when he pointed out to me a tower on a ledge of rock some hundred feet from the shore, on the very brink of the precipice. This bold monument, erected in 1833 by a certain Judge Porter, is called "Terrapin Tower."

We descended the lateral steps of Goat Island. Arrived at a level with the higher current of the Niagara I saw a bridge, or rather some planks, thrown across the rocks, which connected the tower with the bank of the river. This bridge crossed the abyss at the height of a few feet only, the torrent roared beneath. We ventured upon these planks, and in a few moments we had reached the principal rock upon which Terrapin Tower stands. This round tower, forty-five feet high, is built of stone. At the top is a circular balcony, running round a red stuccoed roof. The winding staircase is of wood. Thousands of names are cut upon the steps. Once at the top of the tower, you have only to hold tight and look around you.

The tower is in the centre of the cataract. From the summit the eye pierces to the depths of the abyss, and into the very jaws of the ice-monsters which swallowed

up the torrent. One can feel the shaking of the rock that supports the tower. All around are the most fearful upheavings, as if the very bed of the river was yielding.

One cannot hear oneself speak. The roar of the water is like thunder. The liquid lines dart and hiss like arrows. The spray rises to the summit of the tower, and there forms a magnificent rainbow.

By a simple optical effect, the tower appears to be moving with terrific speed, but in the contrary direction to the fall, for with the opposite effect it would be impossible to look at the fall without feeling giddy.

Breathless and dishevelled we entered the tower for a moment. Then the doctor said :

“Some day, my dear sir, this Terrapin Tower will tumble into the river, and sooner than people think, perhaps.”

“Really !”

“Certainly. The great Canadian fall is almost insensibly extending, but it *does* extend. When this tower was first built in 1833, it was much farther from the cataract. Geologists say that in 35,000 years the Falls will be situated at Queenstown, seven miles away from its present position. According to Mr. Bakewell, it recedes one yard per annum ; according to Sir Charles Lyell, only a foot. A time will, therefore, come when the rock that supports this tower, undermined by the waters, will glide away. Well, my dear sir, remember this, the day on which the Terrapin Tower falls there will be some

eccentric individuals in it who will descend the Niagara with the fragments."

I questioned the doctor by a glance as to whether he would be of the number of those originals. But he made me a sign to follow him, and we again took a look at the Horse-shoe Fall and the surrounding landscape. We could then see the American fall a little foreshortened, separated by the point of the island, where it also forms a small cataract in the centre about 100 feet wide. The American fall, equally beautiful with the other, is straight, not curving, and its height is 164 feet perpendicular. But to see it properly it is necessary to cross to the Canadian side.

We wandered all day on the banks of the Niagara, irresistibly attracted to the tower, where the roar of the waters, the spray, the play of the solar rays, the intoxication and the smell of the cataract kept us in a perpetual state of ecstasy. Then we returned to Goat Island to view the cataract from every point, without ever feeling tired of contemplating it. The doctor wished to take me to the Grotto of the Winds, cut out behind the central fall, which is gained by a staircase from the island, but access to it was interdicted in consequence of the falling away of the friable rocks.

At five o'clock we re-entered Cataract House, and, after a hasty dinner, returned to Goat Island. The doctor wanted to make the tour and see the "Three Sisters," charming eyots at the head of the island; then at nightfall he led me to Terrapin Tower again.

The sun had set behind the darkening hills. The last gleams of daylight had departed. The moon shone brightly. The shadow of the tower was cast upon the abyss. Higher up the waters glode along beneath a light mist. The Canadian bank, already plunged in gloom, contrasted with the lighter mass of Goat Island, and the village of Niagara Falls. Beneath, the gulf, magnified in the half-light, seemed of infinite depth, in which the raging torrent roared. What a spectacle it was ! What artist or writer can do it justice ? For a few moments a moving light appeared upon the horizon. It was the lamp of a train passing over the Niagara bridge two miles away. We remained thus till midnight, silent and motionless, at the summit of the tower, leaning over the torrent that fascinated us. Once, when the moonbeams struck the dust-like foam at a certain angle, I perceived a milky band, a diaphonous ribbon trembling in the shadow. This was a lunar rainbow, a pale irradiation of the orb of night, whose soft light was decomposed when passing through the spray of the cataract.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

NEXT day, the 13th April, the doctor's programme set forth a visit to the Canadian side. We merely had to follow the high ground on the right bank of the Niagara for two miles to the Suspension Bridge. We started at seven o'clock A.M. From the sinuous path extending along the bank, we could perceive the tranquil water of the river, which had got over the troubles incident to its late fall.

At half-past seven we reached the Suspension Bridge. This is the bridge upon which the Great Western and New York Central Railways run together, the only one which gives access to Canada from New York state. This suspension bridge is formed with two levels—the trains pass upon the upper, and the lower one, twenty-three feet below, was used for carriages and foot passengers.

Imagination can scarcely follow the bold engineer, John A. Roebling, of Trendos (New Jersey), who constructed such a viaduct under such conditions, a suspended bridge over which trains can pass at a height of

250 feet above the river, at this point again a "rapid." Suspension Bridge is 800 feet long and 24 wide. Iron stays fixed on the banks keep it steady. The supporting chains, composed of 4,000 wires, are ten inches in diameter, and can resist a weight of 800 tons. The bridge was opened in 1855, and cost 500,000 dollars. Just as we reached the centre of the bridge a train passed overhead, and we could feel the platform bend beneath our feet.

A little above this bridge Blondin crossed the Niagara on a tight-rope stretched from bank to bank, and not over the falls. But the attempt was not the less dangerous. Still, if Blondin astonishes us by his audacity, what must we think of the man who, mounted on his shoulders, accompanied him in his airy promenade !

"He was, perhaps, a *gourmand*," said the doctor. "Blondin made some excellent omelettes on the rope."

We were by this time in Canada, and began to ascend the left bank of the river, so as to obtain a new view of the Falls. Half an hour later we entered an English hotel, where the doctor caused breakfast to be served in proper style. Meantime I inspected the visitors' book, where I found thousands of names. Amongst the most celebrated were : Robert Peel, Lady Franklin, Comte de Paris, Duc de Chartres, Prince de Joinville, Louis Napoleon (1846), Prince and Princess Napoleon, Barnum (with his address), Maurice Sand (1865), Agassiz (1854), Almonde, Prince Hohenlohe, Rothschild, Bertin (Paris), Lady Elgin, Burckhardt (1832), &c. &c.

"Now let us go beneath the Falls," said the doctor, when we had finished our breakfast.

I followed him. A negro conducted us to a dressing-room, where we received a waterproof dress and oilskin cap. Thus prepared, we were conducted by a slippery path, strewn with ferruginous fragments and encumbered with sharp black stones, to the lower level of the Niagara. Thence, amid the spray, we passed behind the great fall. The cataract fell before us as the curtain in a theatre descends before the actors. But what a theatre! And how the air, violently displaced, came rushing in strong currents. Wet to the skin, blinded, and nearly deaf, we could neither hear nor see anything in this cavern, as hermetically sealed by the cataract as if Nature had shut it up by a granite wall.

At nine o'clock we returned to the hotel, and changed our dripping garments. As I was returning along the bank, I uttered a cry of joy and surprise:

"Captain Corsican!"

He heard me, and approached.

"You here?" he cried. "How glad I am to see you!"

"And Fabian and Ellen?" I asked, seizing his hands.

"They are here also, and as well as possible. Fabian is full of hope, almost cheerful. Our poor Ellen is recovering her reason by degrees."

"But how is it I meet you at Niagara?" I asked.

"Niagara," replied Corsican, "is the summer rendez-

vous of both English and Americans. They come here for fresh air, to get well in the sublime prospect of the Falls. Our Ellen appears impressed by this beautiful place; and here we are, resting on the banks of the Niagara. There is our house—Clifton House, it is called—half way up the hill, amongst the trees. There we are living with Mrs. R——, Fabian's sister, who is devoted to our poor friend."

"Has Ellen yet recognised Fabian?" I asked.

"Not yet," replied the captain. "You know that at the moment Drake fell dead, Ellen for a second recovered her reason. A gleam of light shot through the darkened brain. But this lucidity quickly disappeared. However, since we have been up here, in this pure and bracing air, the doctor has remarked a very great improvement in her condition. She is calm and sleeps well, and we can perceive an expression in her eyes as if making an effort to recall something in the past or recognise the present."

"Ah, my dear friend, you will cure her. But where are Fabian and his *fiancée*?"

"Look here," said Corsican, and he pointed towards the bank of the Niagara.

In the direction indicated by the captain, I could see Fabian, who had not yet noticed us. He was standing upon a rock, and some paces in front of him Ellen was seated, motionless. Fabian did not lose sight of her. This part of the left bank is known as the "Table Rock." It is a rocky promontory jutting out into the

river, which boils 200 feet below. Formerly it was of greater extent, but the fall of enormous pieces of rock at intervals have now reduced it to a surface of a few yards only.

Ellen was gazing at the river, and, apparently, deep in thought. From this spot the aspect of the cataract is most sublime, as the guides, with good reason, say. The prospect embraces both falls: to the right the Canadian, the crest of which, crowned with spray, bounds the horizon on this side like the horizon at sea. Opposite was the American fall, and above the pleasant village the Niagara Falls, half lost in the trees. To the left lay the whole perspective of the river flowing between the high banks, below roared the torrent, foaming against the scattered ice-blocks.

I did not wish to disturb Fabian. Corsican, the doctor, and myself, approached the Table Rock. Ellen still remained motionless as a statue. What impression did the scene make on her mind? Would her reason gradually return under the influence of this magnificent spectacle? Suddenly Fabian advanced towards her. Ellen had risen up quickly and approached the precipice with extended arms, but, suddenly stopping, she passed her hand across her forehead, as if chasing away some fantasy. Fabian, pale as death, but determined, with a spring placed himself between the edge of the cliff and his beloved one. She shook her fair hair from her forehead. Her beautiful figure seemed to quiver. Did she see Fabian? No! She was like a dead woman restored

to life, and seeking to verify the existence of things around her.

Captain Corsican and I did not dare to advance a step, and yet we feared some accident, so near to the chasm as they were. But Doctor Pitferge restrained us.

"Let Fabian alone," he said. "Let him be."

I could hear the sobs which escaped from Ellen's heaving bosom. Some inarticulate words escaped her lips. She seemed to wish to speak, and to be unable to do so. At last she cried out :

"Oh ! God—my God Almighty—where, where am I ?"

She was conscious that some one was near, and, turning round, she appeared to us transfigured. A new light shone in her eyes. Fabian, trembling, was standing before her—dumb—with open arms.

"Fabian, Fabian !" she cried at last.

Fabian caught her in his arms as she fell senseless to the ground. He uttered a piercing cry ; he believed that Ellen was dead. But the doctor now interfered.

"You may be quite easy," he said to Fabian, "this crisis will be the saving of her."

Ellen was carried to Clifton House, and put to bed, where she regained consciousness and slept peacefully.

Fabian, encouraged by the doctor, was full of hope—Ellen had recognised him. He came back to us.

"We shall restore her completely," he said to me. "Every day I assist to bring her mind back to us. To-day, or perhaps to-morrow, my Ellen will be restored

to me. Ah, gracious Heaven be praised ! We will remain in this place as long as it is good for her. Shall it not be so, Archibald ? ”

The captain pressed Fabian in his arms. Fabian then was congratulated by me and the doctor. He overwhelmed us with thanks. He wrapped us in his mantle of Hope ; and never was hope better founded. Ellen’s recovery was at hand.

But we had to leave them. Scarcely an hour remained for us to return to Niagara Falls. At the moment of our departure Ellen still slept. Fabian took a warm farewell of us, and Captain Corsican, who was greatly moved, having promised to telegraph to us news of Ellen, bade us adieu ; and at mid-day we quitted Clifton House.

CHAPTER XXXIX

SHORTLY afterwards we descended a long slope on the Canadian side. This slope led us to the river bank, where large sheets of ice were still visible. There a boat was waiting to take us across to America. One traveller had already taken his place in it. This was a Kentucky engineer, who gave his name and title to the doctor. We embarked at once, and, sometimes pushing away the ice-blocks, sometimes passing through them, we gained the centre of the river, where the current kept it free from ice. There we took a "last fond look" at the splendid Falls of Niagara. Our companion looked at it critically.

"Is it not splendid? is it not magnificent?" I said.

"Yes," he replied. "But what a wasted mechanical force! What machinery might not be turned by such a fall of water!"

I never had a greater inclination to throw any engineer into the water than at that moment.

On the other side of the river, a little railroad, almost vertical, worked by a rope moved by the American fall, raised us to the level of the bank in a few seconds. At half-past one we took the express, which carried us to Buffalo at a quarter-past two. Having visited the large and new town, and tasted the water of Lake Erie, we again took the New York Central Railroad at six o'clock P.M. Next day, on leaving the comfortable sleeping car, we found ourselves at Albany; and the Hudson Railroad, which traverses the left bank of the river, brought us to New York some hours later.

The following day, 15th April, accompanied by the indefatigable doctor, I went over the city, saw the East River and Brooklyn. That evening I took my farewell of the brave Dean Pitferge, and in leaving him felt I had lost a friend.

Tuesday, 16th April, was the day fixed for the departure of the *Great Eastern*, and at eleven o'clock I presented myself at Thirty-seventh Pier, where the tender was awaiting the passengers. It was already crowded with them and their trunks. I embarked. At the moment we were about to start I was seized by the arm. It was Doctor Pitferge once more!

"What!" I exclaimed, "are you returning to Europe?"

"Yes, my dear sir."

"By the *Great Eastern*?"

"Certainly," replied this original, smiling. "I have thought over it, and made up my mind to go. Just

think, this may be the last voyage of the *Great Eastern*, and from which she will never return !”

The bell was giving the signal for departure, when one of the stewards from the Fifth Avenue Hotel ran up in great haste to hand me a telegram, dated from Niagara Falls :

“Ellen is awake, her reason has quite returned,” said Corsican, “and the doctor vouches for her recovery.”

I communicated this good news to Doctor Pitferge.

“Vouches for her, does he?” said my companion, grumbling, “so do I, but what does that prove? Whoever would answer for me, for you, for all of us, my dear friend, would, perhaps, be just as likely to be wrong as right.”

Twelve days afterwards we arrived at Brest, and next day in Paris. The return voyage was made without accident, to the great disappointment of Dean Pitferge, who was always expecting his shipwreck.

And when I am seated quietly at home, if I had not made these notes daily, I should fancy that the *Great Eastern*, that “floating city,” which I lived in for a month, the meeting of Ellen and Fabian, the incomparable Niagara, had been all a dream ! How pleasant is travelling, even when one returns, as the doctor would say.

For eight months I heard nothing of that original personage. But one day the post brought me a letter

covered with many coloured stamps, and commencing as follows :

“On board the *Coringuy*, on the reefs of Auckland. At last we have been shipwrecked !”

And it finished with the following words :

“I have never felt so happy in my life !

“ Very sincerely yours,

“ DEAN PITFERGE.”

THE END.

THE BLOCKADE RUNNERS.

THE BLOCKADE RUNNERS

CHAPTER I.

THE "DOLPHIN."

THE Clyde was the first river that was disturbed by the wheels of a steamer. The time was 1812, the steamer was the *Comet*, and it performed a regular service between Glasgow and Greenock, at a speed of six miles an hour. Since that time more than a million steamers or packets have ascended or descended the Clyde, and the inhabitants of the fine commercial city ought to be pretty well acquainted with the marvels of steam navigation.

Nevertheless, on the 3rd of December, 1862, a great crowd of ship-owners, merchants, manufacturers, workmen, sailors, women; and children, filled the muddy streets of Glasgow, on their way to Kelvin Dock, the vast ship-building yard of Messrs. Tod and Macgregor. This latter name proves incontestably that the descendants of famous Highlanders have become manufacturers, and that all the vassals of the old clans have been made workmen.

Kelvin Dock is situated some minutes' walk from the town, on the right bank of the Clyde. The immense yards were soon crowded with curious observers; not a point on the quay, not a wall, not a warehouse roof that could afford any standing room, was unoccupied. The river was swarming with boats, and on the opposite heights of Govan a tremendous crowd had also assembled.

It was not such an extraordinary ceremony, after all, that these people had come out to see. It was merely a ship-launch, which was a very common sight for the Glasgow public. The *Dolphin*—for that was the name of the vessel just constructed by Tod and Macgregor—must then, possess a peculiar interest. But, as a fact, it had none. She was a large ship of 1,500 tons, iron-plated, and built for speed. Her engines, turned out at Lancefield, were “high pressure,” and 500-horse power. She was also furnished with twin screws, one on each side of the stern-post, and working independently, the invention of Messrs. Dudgeon, of Millwall, which gives great speed and admits of a vessel turning within a very limited space. The draught of water of the *Dolphin* did not appear, to those conversant with such matters, to be very considerable, and they concluded rightly that she was destined for shallow seas. But all these peculiarities would not justify the extreme public interest. Take her as she lay, the *Dolphin* was only an ordinary vessel. Her launching would not present any more than the usual difficulties. The Clyde had already received into its bosom many a ship of a greater tonnage, and the launching of the *Dolphin* would only be in the ordinary manner.

Just at “slack water,” when the tide was about to

ebb, the business of the launch commenced. The sound of mallets falling upon the wedges under the keel was heard. Very soon after a trembling motion seemed to animate the vessel. Although she had been lifted very slightly, we could see she was shaken, and then she started, slowly at first, then more quickly, and in a few moments the *Dolphin*, gliding down the well-greased "slips," plunged into the Clyde, amid the roar of the saluting cannon. The stern encountered the muddy, oozy bed of the river, then lifting herself upon the summit of a gigantic wave, the splendid steamer, impelled by its momentum, would have struck the opposite quays of Govan if she had not been brought up by all the power of her grapnels.

The launch had been a great success. The *Dolphin* sat gracefully upon the waters of the Clyde. All the spectators clapped their hands when she took to her "native element," and deafening hurrahs rose from both sides of the river.

But what gave rise to all this applause and excitement? No doubt the most enthusiastic of the spectators would have been puzzled to explain their enthusiasm. Whence arose the peculiar interest excited by this vessel? Merely the mystery which shrouded her destination. No one knew for what branch of commerce she was destined; and, on interrogating the various groups of spectators, one was astonished to hear the divers opinions expressed upon this important point.

However, the better informed—or, rather, those who pretended to be so—agreed in stating that the steamer was destined to play a part in the terrible war which was then decimating the United States of America. But they

knew no more than this, and whether the *Dolphin* were a privateer, a transport, a Confederate ship, or Federal man-of-war, no one knew.

"Hurrah!" cried some one, affirming that the *Dolphin* had been built for the Southern States.

"Hear, hear!" cried another, as he asseverated that a swifter ship had never crossed the Atlantic.

Thus the ultimate destination was unknown, and to become acquainted with it it was necessary to be a partner, or at least an intimate friend of Vincent Playfair and Co., of Glasgow.

A rich, powerful, and intelligent house of business, Playfair and Co. were of equally good social standing. They were an old and honourable family, and were descended from those "tobacco lords" who built the most beautiful quarters of the town. These able merchants, after the Act of Union, had instituted the first warehouses in Glasgow for the sale of tobacco from Virginia and Maryland. Immense fortunes were made, a new centre of commerce was created. Glasgow soon became industrial and manufacturing. Mills and factories sprang up on all sides, and in a few years the prosperity of the city reached a very high pitch.

The firm of Playfair remained faithful to the enterprising spirit of their ancestors. It launched into the boldest schemes, and sustained the honour of British commerce. The responsible head of the house, a man of fifty years of age, of an essentially practical and determined temperament, was somewhat rash, and a bold speculator. Nothing touched him outside his business, not even its political side; but, above all, he was honest and true.

However, he could not lay claim to the idea of having constructed and fitted out the *Dolphin*. She really belonged to James Playfair, his nephew, a fine young fellow of thirty, and the pluckiest skipper of the Merchant Marine in the United Kingdom.

One day it happened, at the Tontine Coffee House, that James Playfair, having read the American papers with ill-concealed rage, burst upon his uncle with the following bold project :

"Uncle Vincent," he said, rushing into the subject, "here are two millions to be made in a month at most !"

"And what is the risk ?" asked Uncle Vincent.

"A ship and her cargo."

"No more than that ?"

"No more, except the skins of the captain and crew ; but they don't count."

"Let us see," replied Uncle Vincent, who rather enjoyed this kind of thing.

"You *have* seen it all," replied James Playfair. "You have read the *Tribune*, the *New York Herald*, the *New York Times*, the *Richmond Engineer*, the *American Review*, I suppose ?"

"Twenty times, James."

"And you believe, as I do, that this war in the United States is likely to last ?"

"For a very long time."

"You know to what an extent this contest puts the interest of England, and particularly Glasgow interest, at stake."

"And more especially that of the house of Playfair and Co.," replied Uncle Vincent.

"That above all," replied the young captain.

"I worry myself about it every day, James ; and I can't look the thing in the face without fearing the great commercial disasters this war will bring in its train. Not that the house of Playfair is at all shaky, but its correspondents may be wanting. Ah, those blessed Americans ! Slaveholders or abolitionists, I have no faith in any of them ; they may all go to the devil for me."

If Vincent Playfair, *vis-à-vis* of the great principles of humanity, was wrong in speaking thus, he was right from a merely commercial point of view. The most important article of American export was now failing in Glasgow. The cotton famine was becoming daily more threatening. Thousands of operatives were reduced to exist by public charity. Glasgow possesses 25,000 looms, which before the war produced 625,000 yards of spun cotton daily, equal to £50,000,000 annually. From these figures it may be guessed what excitement was caused amid the working population when the material failed ! Houses were "stopping" every hour. "Suspension" was the result in all the factories. The workpeople were dying of hunger.

It was the contemplation of so much misery that gave James Playfair the idea of this bold project.

"I will go and look for cotton," he said ; "and, come what may, I will bring it back !"

But being a merchant as well as his uncle Vincent, he put the matter in the form of an exchange, and proposed it as a matter of business.

"Uncle Vincent," he said, "this is my notion."

"Let's have it, James."

"Well, it's simple enough. Let us build a vessel

which shall be faster and of greater carrying power than any other in the trade."

"That is possible."

"We will load her with munitions of war, food, and clothing."

"That's of course."

"I will take command of the steamer. I will outstrip all the Federal vessels in speed. I will break the blockade of the southern ports——"

"You will have to sell your cargo dearly to the Confederates ; they will want it," replied the uncle.

"And I will return loaded with cotton."

"Which they will give you for nothing !"

"Just so, uncle. Will that plan answer ?"

"Yes. But shall you get through ?"

"I shall if I have a good ship under me."

"We can have one built for the purpose. But the crew ?"

"Oh ! I will find them. I do not want many men—just sufficient to work her, that's all. It will not be a question of fighting the Federals, but of distancing them."

"And distanced they shall be," replied Uncle Vincent, in a peremptory tone. "Now tell me, James, to what point of the American coast do you think of directing your course ?"

"Well, so far, uncle, ships have broken the blockade at New Orleans, Wilmington, and Savannah. But I think of going right at Charleston ! No English vessel has hitherto penetrated the lines except the *Bermuda*. I will do as she did, and if my vessel draw little water I shall be enabled to go where the Federal ships cannot follow me."

"The fact is," said Uncle Vincent, "that Charleston is overflowing with cotton; they are burning it to rid themselves of it."

"Yes," replied James, "and, besides that, Beauregard is short of provisions. He will pay me anything I like for my supplies."

"Just so; and when will you start?"

"In six months. I must have long nights—winter nights—to get through more easily."

"It shall be done, nephew."

"Is that a bargain, uncle?"

"It is."

"Now, mum's the word!"

"Of course."

And that is how, five months later, the steamship *Dolphin* came to be launched from Kelvin Dock; and why nobody could tell, for certain, her destination.

CHAPTER II.

GETTING READY FOR SEA.

THE equipment of the *Dolphin* proceeded rapidly. Her rigging was set up, and only wanted adjustment. The *Dolphin* was a three-masted schooner-rigged vessel; but the number of masts was a useless luxury, for she was not to trust to the wind, but to her powerful engines, to escape the Federal cruisers. And she was right!

Towards the end of December the *Dolphin* made her trial trips in the Clyde. Whether the builder or the commander was the more satisfied I cannot say. The new steamer went at a great pace, and the patent log showed a speed of seventeen miles an hour—a speed hitherto unobtained by any French, English, or American vessel.

The *Dolphin*, evidently, in a contest with the most rapid ships, would have come off the winner by several lengths.

On the 25th December the business of loading was begun. The steamer was hauled alongside the quay, a little below Glasgow Bridge—the last bridge which spans the Clyde seaward. There the extensive wharves were filled with an immense supply of clothing, arms, and

ammunition, which were rapidly transferred to the hold of the *Dolphin*.

The nature of the cargo betrayed the mysterious destination of the ship, and the house of Playfair could not keep the secret longer; besides, the *Dolphin* need not delay her departure. No American cruiser had been signalled in British waters; and, then, when the question of providing a crew arose, how could secrecy be maintained? Men could not be embarked without their destination becoming known. After all, they were risking their necks; and when a man risks his neck, it is not unreasonable that he should be told how and why he risks it.

However, the prospect stopped no one. The pay was good, and each one was to have a share in the venture. Sailors presented themselves in numbers, and first-rate hands too. James Playfair was puzzled who to choose; but he made his selection wisely, and in eight-and-forty hours the roll bore the names of thirty sailors who would have done honour to the Queen's yacht.

The departure was fixed for the 3rd January. The *Dolphin* was ready on the 31st December. Her hold was crammed with supplies, her bunkers with coal. Nothing need detain her longer.

The skipper came on board on the 2nd January, and was taking a last look round with the keen eye of a commander, when a man presented himself on the fore-castle, and asked to see James Playfair. One of the sailors conducted him to the poop.

The new-comer was a broad-shouldered fellow with a ruddy face, whose simple expression concealed a certain depth of sharpness and merriment. He did not appear

to be a sailor, and gazed around him like a man little accustomed to shipping. Nevertheless he assumed the swagger of a sailor, and cast an eye aloft as he swayed himself about like a true "salt."

When he was ushered into the captain's presence he looked at him fixedly, and said :

"Captain James Playfair?"

"That is myself," replied the skipper. "What is your business?"

"To embark with you."

"There is no room ; my number is complete."

"Oh, an extra hand will not inconvenience you ; on the contrary."

"You think so," said James Playfair, looking his interlocutor full in the face.

"I am sure of it," replied the sailor.

"But who are you?" asked the captain.

"Merely a sailor, I must say ; a stout fellow, and a determined one to boot. Two such powerful arms as I have the honour to offer are not to be despised on board a ship."

"But there are other ships besides the *Dolphin*, and other captains besides James Playfair. Why come to me?"

"Because I wish to serve on board the *Dolphin*, and under the orders of Captain James Playfair."

"Well, I do not require your services."

"One is always glad of a strong hand, and if you wish to try me with three or four of your strongest fellows, I am ready to stand the test."

"Stay where you are, then," replied James Playfair.

"And what is your name?"

"Crockston, at your service."

The captain stepped back a few paces to make a more minute inspection of this Hercules, who had presented himself in this unceremonious fashion. His whole appearance betokened great strength, and it was evident he was of no common build, and that he was not indifferent to it.

"Where have you sailed?" inquired Playfair.

"A little everywhere."

"And do you know whither the *Dolphin* is bound?"

"Yes; that is the attraction for me."

"Well, I will not let a fellow like you escape me. Go and find the mate, Mr. Mathew, and get him to enrol you."

Having thus spoken, James Playfair expected the man to run forward at once; but he was mistaken. Crockston did not stir.

"Well! you have heard what I said?" asked the captain.

"Yes," replied the sailor; "but I have not finished; I have something else to propose."

"Oh! you are wasting my time," replied James Playfair, roughly. "I have no time to spare for talking."

"I will not detain you long," replied Crockston.

"Two words more and I have done. I have a nephew."

"He has a very fine uncle, then," said James Playfair.

"Ha, ha!" laughed Crockston.

"Well! have you done?" demanded the captain, impatiently.

"Here is the case, then. When the uncle is engaged it is understood that the nephew is included in the bargain!"

"Oh, indeed !"

"Yes ; that is the custom. One does not go without the other."

"And what is this nephew ?"

"A youth of fifteen, whom I am going to train. He is very willing, and will make a good sailor one of these days."

"Indeed, Master Crockston ; and so you take the *Dolphin* for a boy's training ship," said the captain.

"Do not speak ill of boys," replied the sailor. "There was one boy who became Admiral Nelson, and another Admiral Franklin."

"By Jove, my friend, you have a way of speaking that pleases me. Bring your nephew with you. But if I do not find the uncle the man he represents himself to be, he and I will have a 'crow to pluck' between us. Go now, and return in an hour."

Crockston needed no second bidding. He saluted the captain somewhat awkwardly, and regained the quay. After the lapse of an hour he returned on board with his nephew, a boy of fourteen or fifteen, pale and sickly-looking, with a timid air of astonishment, that showed he did not inherit the moral courage and vigorous qualities of his uncle, who was obliged to encourage him with some cheering words.

"Come along," he said, "pluck up your spirits. They cannot eat you ! Besides, there is still time to retract."

"No, no !" replied the young man. "May God protect us !"

That afternoon the sailor Crockston and the boy

John Stiggs were enrolled amongst the ship's company of the *Dolphin*.

At five the following morning the steamer's fires were lighted, and steam was got up. The decks trembled as the volumes of vapour went hissing through the escape-pipes. The hour of departure had arrived.

A considerable crowd had assembled, notwithstanding the early hour, upon the neighbouring quays, and upon Glasgow Bridge, to give the adventurous vessel a hearty cheer. Vincent Playfair was there to take farewell of Captain James; but he behaved, under the circumstances, like a Roman of old time. His last greeting was characteristic:

"Go, James," he said. "Go quickly, and return as soon as possible. Above all things, do not abuse your position. Sell dearly, buy cheaply, and you will gain your uncle's esteem."

With this admonition, culled from the Manual of the Perfect Merchant, the uncle parted from his nephew, and all visitors quitted the ship.

Crockston and John Stiggs were there standing on the forecastle, and the former said to the boy:

"All goes well; all goes well. We shall be at sea in two hours, and I have great hopes of a voyage that begins in this way."

The lad pressed Crockston's hand in reply.

James Playfair now gave his final orders for departure.

"Is steam up?" he asked.

"Yes," was Mr. Mathew's reply.

"Well, then, heave up the anchors."

This was immediately done, and then the screws

were set in motion. The *Dolphin* moved away amidst the ships in harbour, and soon disappeared from the eyes of the crowd, and out of the hearing of their farewell cheers.

The descent of the Clyde was easily performed. One could almost imagine that the river had been artificially constructed by a master-hand. For sixty years, thanks to the incessant dredging operations, it had been deepened fifteen feet, and widened to three times its original breadth between the quays. The forest of masts and chimneys was soon lost amid the smoke and mist, and the clang of the foundries, and the noise of the axes in the yards, grew faint in the distance. After the village of Patrick had been reached, country houses and villas succeeded to manufactories. The *Dolphin* now slackened speed, and wended her way between the dykes which confine the river at a level higher than the natural shore and in very narrow channels. The inconvenience is not very great, for depth is the great *desideratum* in a navigable river. The *Dolphin*, in charge of one of the excellent pilots of the Irish sea, meandered unhesitatingly amid the buoys, the stony heaps, and "biggin" topped with beacons, that served to indicate the channel. Renfrew was soon passed, and the Clyde extends itself after that at the foot of the Kilpatrick Hills, near Bowling Bay, at the end of which opens the canal which unites Edinburgh with Glasgow.

At length the outline of Dumbarton Castle was sighted, which, 400 feet above the water, was not easily distinguishable through the mist, and soon, near the left bank, the harbour ships of Glasgow danced upon the waves raised by the *Dolphin*. A few miles further on

Greenock, the birthplace of James Watt, was passed. The *Dolphin* was then at the mouth of the Clyde, and at the entrance of the gulf which takes its waters to the North Sea. There the first undulations of the ocean were felt as the ship coasted the picturesque shores of the Isle of Arran.

Finally the promontory of Cantire was doubled, and Rathlin Island sighted. Then the pilot went on board his cutter, which had been cruising in the offing. The *Dolphin*, now under the care of her own captain, steered by an unfrequented passage by the north of Ireland, and soon, having lost sight of European land, she stood boldly out into the ocean.

CHAPTER III.

AT SEA.

THE *Dolphin* possessed a capital crew—not a fighting crew, but a good working set of fellows, which was what she required. The men were all brave and determined, but all, more or less, merchants. They sought fortune rather than fame. They had no colours to show, no flag to defend with cannon; besides, all the artillery on board consisted of two little signal-guns.

The *Dolphin* sailed splendidly, and answered the utmost expectations of her builders and of her commander; she had soon cleared British waters, and not a ship was to be seen. The great high-road of the ocean was clear. Besides, no Federal cruiser could attack her, as she was sailing under the British flag. She might be followed, though, and prevented from running the blockade, and it was in prospect of this contingency that James Playfair had sacrificed everything to the speed of his vessel.

However, be that as it might, they kept a good lookout on board. Notwithstanding the cold, a man was always at the mast-head ready to signal the first appear

ance of a sail on the horizon. At night-fall the captain gave the strictest directions to Mr. Mathew, the mate.

"Don't keep your look-out man aloft too long," said he. "He may be seized by the cold and get sleepy. Relieve them pretty frequently."

"Aye, aye, sir," replied Mathew.

"I think Crockston may be employed on this service. He pretends to have excellent sight, and we will test it. Give him the morning watch, he will have to see through the mist then. Take care that I am called if anything unusual happens."

James Playfair then descended to his cabin, and Mathew sent for Crockston, and gave him his orders.

"To-morrow, at six o'clock," said he, "you must go aloft to the foretop and keep the look-out."

A loud grunt was Crockston's reply in the affirmative. But scarcely had Mathew turned his back than the sailor muttered some indistinguishable words, and finished by exclaiming :

"What the devil does he mean by the foretop?"

Just then his nephew, John Stiggs, approached him.

"Well, my brave Crockston!" he cried.

"Oh! it's all right," replied the sailor, with a forced smile. "There is nothing the matter, only this beastly boat shakes herself like a dog just out of the water, and I am beginning to feel rather uncomfortable."

"My poor fellow," said the lad, regarding Crockston with a deep glance of gratitude.

"And when I think," continued the sailor, "that at my age I am likely to be sea-sick, I feel I must be a silly muff. But it must be so, and it will occur in the foretop."

"Dear Crockston, and it is all for my sake that——"

"For you and him," replied Crockston. "But not a word below, John. Trust in Providence—He will never fail you."

As he spoke these words, Crockston went below with John Stiggs, and the sailor did not sleep until he had seen the lad comfortably in bed in the small cabin that had been reserved for him.

Next morning, at six o'clock, Crockston got up to repair to his station. He went on deck, and was ordered to ascend the rigging and keep a bright look-out !

The sailor seemed rather undecided what to do, then, apparently having made up his mind, he proceeded astern.

"Hallo ! where are you going ?" cried Mathew.

"Where you told me to go," replied Crockston.

"I told you to go to the foretop."

"Well, I am going," replied the 'sailor,' as he continued his way to the poop.

"You lubber !" cried Mathew, angrily. Are you going to find the foretop on the mizzenmast ? It strikes me you are a cockney, who can't even tie a reef or make a splice. On what lighter have you served, man ? Go forward, you idiot, go forward !"

The crew, who had assembled, set up a shout of laughter at the miserable appearance of Crockston as he approached the forecastle again.

"So," he exclaimed looking at the foremast, the top of which was hidden in the mist, "so I am to get up that, am I ?"

"Yes," replied Mathew, "and look sharp, too. By St. Patrick, a Federal cruiser will run us down before this lubber is aloft !"

Crockston, without speaking, hoisted himself upon the bulwarks with some difficulty, and then commenced to ascend the shrouds in the most awkward manner, and like a man who did not know where to place his feet or hands ; then, having reached the top, instead of jumping lightly upon it, he remained in the rigging motionless, and holding on like a person on the verge of vertigo. Mathew, out of patience with his stupidity, commanded him to descend.

“The fellow has never been a sailor in his life. Johnson, go and see what he has got in his bag.”

The boatswain, thus addressed, descended on his errand. Meantime Crockston was slowly descending ; but his foot slipped—he caught a rope, and, sliding down, came heavily upon deck.

“You clumsy lubber—you fresh-water sailor !” cried Mathew by way of consolation. “What business have you on board the *Dolphin*? You shipped as an able seaman, and cannot distinguish the foremast from the mizzen ! Well, my friend, you and I will have a little conversation by-and-by.”

Crockston made no answer. He bent his back as if resigned to bear anything. At that moment the boatswain returned from his inspection.

“This is all I could find,” said he to the mate, “a suspicious portfolio of letters.”

“Give it me,” said Mathew. “Ah ! letters with United States postage-stamps, addressed to Mr. Halliburt, of Boston—an abolitionist—a Federal ! Wretch ! So you are a traitor, and have tried to sneak on board so as to betray us. But be easy, your business is settled, and you will have a taste of the cat ! Boatswain, call

the captain ; meanwhile, you men keep watch upon this rascal."

Crockston, as he heard these compliments, made a fearful grimace, but did not speak a word. They had lashed him to the capstan, and he could not move hand nor foot.

James Playfair soon came forward, and the mate put him in possession of the circumstances.

"What have you to say to this ?" asked James Playfair, with scarce controlled anger.

"Nothing," replied Crockston.

"What did you come aboard for, then ?"

"Nothing."

"What do you expect now from me ?"

"Nothing."

"Who are you ?—an American, as these letters appear to prove ?"

Crockston did not reply.

"Boatswain !" cried James Playfair, "fifty lashes, to make this rascal find his tongue. Will that suffice, Crockston ?"

"That remains to be seen," replied the uncle of John Stiggs, without flinching.

"Start him," said the boatswain.

At this order, two strong fellows advanced and stripped Crockston. They had already seized the "cats," and were swinging them over the shoulders of the sailor, when John Stiggs, pale and discomposed, hurried upon deck.

"Captain !" he cried.

"Aha, the nephew !" cried Playfair.

"Captain !" cried the lad, with a great effort to

appear composed. I will tell you what Crockston does not wish to say. I will not hide what he wants to conceal. He is an American, and so am I. We are both enemies of the slave-owners, but have not come on board as traitors, or to betray the *Dolphin* to the Federal cruisers."

"Why did you come, then?" asked the captain in a severe tone, and scrutinising the lad closely.

The youth hesitated for a moment ere he replied. Then in a firm tone he said:

"Captain, I should like to speak with you in private."

While John Stiggs was speaking, James Playfair did not cease to regard him fixedly. The youthful and gentle face; the voice of peculiar sweetness; the beauty and the whiteness of the hands, scarcely hidden by the staining to which they had been subjected; the large eyes, whose animation could not conceal their tenderness; all these gave rise to a suspicion in the captain's mind. When John Stiggs had preferred his request, Playfair looked at Crockston, who shrugged his shoulders, and then the captain fixed upon the lad a questioning look, which the latter could not sustain, and merely said, "Come."

John Stiggs followed the captain astern, and there James Playfair, opening the door of his cabin, said to the lad, whose cheeks were pale with emotion:

"Be so good as to enter, miss, if you please."

Thus addressed, "John" blushed, and tears escaped involuntarily from his eyes.

"Be not alarmed," said Playfair, in a gentle tone; "but pray tell me to what circumstance I owe the honour of your presence on board my ship."

The young girl hesitated an instant, then, reassured by the captain's countenance, she spoke out:

"Sir," she said, "I am going to rejoin my father at Charleston. The town is invested by land, and blockaded by sea. I did not know how I could get there, when I happened to hear that the *Dolphin* intended to break the blockade. So I have taken a passage on your ship, sir, and I hope you will excuse me if I have acted against your will. Would you have refused me?"

"Most certainly," replied James Playfair.

"Then I did well not to ask you," replied the young girl, in a firmer voice.

The captain crossed his arms, took a few turns up and down the cabin, and then, approaching her, said:

"What is your name?"

"Jenny Halliburt."

"Your father is a Boston gentleman, if I remember the addresses of the letters correctly?"

"Yes."

"And so a Northerner finds himself in a Southern town, in the very centre of hostilities?"

"My father is a prisoner. He was in Charleston when the civil war first broke out, and when the troops of the Union were driven from Fort Sumter by the Confederates. My father's proclivities signalled him out for the hatred of the slave-owner's party, and by the orders of General Beauregard he was imprisoned. I was then in England with a relative, who has lately died, and, being alone, without any other support than Crockston, our oldest and most faithful servant, I wished to rejoin my father—even to share his prison."

"And what was Mr. Halliburt?" asked James Playfair.

"A loyal and brave journalist," replied Jenny, proudly; "one of the most worthy editors of the *Tribune*, and who was the most energetic in defending the cause of the negroes."

"An abolitionist!" cried the captain; "one of those who, under the pretext of abolishing slavery, have covered their country with blood and ruin!"

"Sir!" replied Jenny, growing pale, "you insult my father. You ought not to forget that I alone am left to defend him!"

A vivid blush rose to the young captain's forehead—anger, mingled with shame, took possession of him. He was on the point of replying without consideration for the young girl, but he restrained himself, and opened the door of his cabin.

"Bo'sun," he cried.

The boatswain appeared immediately.

"This cabin from henceforth is Miss Jenny Halliburt's. Let them prepare a cot for me below. I want nothing more."

The boatswain gazed in astonishment at the "lad," now designated as a young lady; but at a sign from James Playfair he disappeared.

"And now, miss, you are at home," said the young captain of the *Dolphin*. And then he retired.

CHAPTER IV.

CROCKSTON'S STRATEGY.

THE whole ship's company were soon acquainted with Miss Halliburt's history, for Crockston put no further restraint upon himself. By the captain's orders he was released from the capstan, and the "cat" returned to its resting-place.

"A very nice animal indeed," said Crockston, "more particularly when it extends its velvety paw."

As soon as he was released, he went below and got up a small valise, which he carried to Miss Jenny. The young lady was thus enabled to resume her proper dress, but she still remained in the cabin and did not appear on deck at all.

As for Crockston, it was now by general consent established that he was no more a sailor than a "horse marine," and was thus exempted from all duty on board.

Meanwhile the *Dolphin* was steaming rapidly across the Atlantic with the aid of her twin screws, and nothing was necessary but to keep a good look-out. The day after the discovery of Miss Jenny's *incognito*, James Playfair was pacing the quarter-deck with rapid strides. He

had made no attempt to see the lady again, nor to resume the conversation of the previous day.

During his promenade Crockston passed him frequently, and looked at the captain with a side-long glance of satisfaction. He was evidently desirous to speak, and he kept looking at him in a manner and with an insistence which ended in the captain's saying, impatiently :

"Well, now, what do you want? You go round and round me like a swimmer around a buoy. Will you soon have done?"

"Excuse me," said Crockston, winking, "I have something to say to you."

"What have you to say?"

"Oh! it's very simple; I want to tell you plainly that you are a first-rate fellow at bottom."

"Why so?"

"At bottom, and also outwardly."

"I don't want your compliments."

"They are not compliments at all. I will now venture that till we have got to the end."

"Got to what end?"

"The end of your undertaking."

"So it seems I have a task to accomplish?"

"Certainly. You have taken that young lady and myself on board ~~your~~ ship. Good! You have given up your cabin to Miss Halliburt. Better! You have relieved me from the 'cat.' Best of all! You will take us to Charleston direct. That is delightful, but it is not everything."

"How do you mean 'not everything?'" cried James Playfair, quite paralysed by Crockston's assurance.

"Certainly not everything," replied the sailor, knowingly. "Her father is a prisoner there."

"What then?"

"Well, you must release him."

"Release Miss Halliburt's father?"

"Of course. He is a worthy man and a courageous citizen. It is worth a little trouble and risk to save him."

"Master Crockston," said James Playfair, with a frown, "you're a capital hand at a joke, I see. But hold hard, I am in no humour for joking just now."

"You quite misunderstand me, captain," replied the American; "I have not the least notion of joking. I am perfectly serious. What I propose may at first sight appear very absurd to you, but when you have considered the matter you will see you cannot act otherwise."

"How? Do you mean to say that I must deliver Mr. Halliburt?"

"Without doubt. You can demand his release from General Beauregard, who will not refuse it."

"But suppose he does refuse!"

"Then," replied Crockston, calmly, "we must employ stronger measures, and take the prisoner from under the very noses of the Confederates."

"So," said James Playfair, whose anger was gradually rising, "so, not content to pass the Federal fleet, and force the blockade of Charleston, it is necessary that I should run out to sea again, under the cannon of the forts, and all to deliver a man I do not know, an abolitionist whom I detest, a journalist who sheds his ink and never his blood!"

"Oh ! it will be only a cannon-shot more or less," replied Crockston.

"Master Crockston," said James Playfair, "just listen a moment. If you ever are unfortunate enough to address me on this subject again, I will confine you to the hold for the rest of the trip, to teach you to keep your tongue quiet."

As he spoke the captain took leave of the American, who went forward muttering :

"Well, I am not dissatisfied with this conversation. The affair is started. It will go—it will go !"

When James Playfair had used the term, "An abolitionist whom I detest," he said too much. He was by no means a partisan of slavery, but he did not wish to admit that the question of servitude was predominant in the civil war of the United States, in spite of the formal declaration of President Lincoln.

Did Playfair, then, imagine that the Southern States—eight against thirty-six—had in principle the right to secede, when they had voluntarily united themselves ? No. He disliked the Northerners, that was all. He disliked them as being separated from their common family, as Englishmen who had thought fit to do what he, James Playfair, now approved in the Confederate States.

Such were the political opinions of the captain of the *Dolphin* ; but, besides this, the civil war annoyed him personally, and he bore a grudge against those who had caused it. One can now understand how he was likely to receive this proposal to set free a Northerner, and to turn his back upon the Confederates, with whom he was supposed to transact business.

Meanwhile the insinuations of Crockston worried him. He discarded the ideas, but they returned to him incessantly, and when, next day, Miss Jenny ascended to the deck for a moment, he did not dare to look her in the face.

And that was a pity, most surely ; for this young lady, with fair hair and an intelligent and pleasant face, merited the regard of a young man of thirty. But James felt embarrassed in her society. He felt that this charming creature possessed a strong and generous mind, whose education had been completed in the school of misfortune. He understood that his reserve towards her amounted to a refusal to acquiesce in her dearest wishes. Besides, Miss Jenny did not seek James Playfair, but she no longer avoided him, and for the first few days they seldom spoke to each other. Miss Halliburt scarcely left her cabin, and certainly she would not have spoken to the captain of the *Dolphin*, if Crockston had not, by his strategy, brought the two together.

That worthy American was a faithful servant of the Halliburt family. He had been brought up in the house of his master, and his devotion knew no bounds. His good sense equalled his courage and strength. As they had already seen, he had a habit of looking things in the face. He adopted a wonderful philosophy on all occasions ; he gave way but seldom to discouraging influences, and out of the most adverse circumstances he managed to find a way with the most consummate skill.

This brave man had got the idea into his head to release Mr. Halliburt—to use the ship, and even the captain, and to return to England. Such was his plan, if the young lady had no other object but to rejoin her

father, and share his captivity. It was this that Crockston tried to make intelligible to the captain. He had, so to speak, lashed his ship alongside, but the enemy had not surrendered. Quite the contrary.

"It is absolutely necessary," he said, "that Miss Jenny and the captain should understand each other. If they keep aloof all the voyage, they will never do so. They must speak to each other and talk over matters, and even get into discussions; but talk they must, and may I be hanged if, during the conversation, James Playfair himself does not propose to do the very thing that he has refused to do to-day for me."

But when Crockston saw that the young people rather avoided each other, he was perplexed.

"We must push ahead a bit," he said.

So, upon the morning of the fourth day, he accosted Miss Halliburt, rubbing his hands with an air of the greatest satisfaction.

"Good news!" he cried, "good news! You will never guess what has been proposed by the captain—a very nice young man he is, too. Now guess!"

"Ah!" cried Jenny, who was greatly agitated, "he has then suggested to you——"

"To release Mr. Halliburt from the Confederates, and to take him back to England."

"Is that really true?" asked Jenny.

"Just as I say, miss. He is a kind-hearted man, indeed, is James Playfair. Just like all Britishers, either all good, or all bad! And he may depend upon my reciprocating this, for I am ready to be cut in pieces for his sake, if he wanted it!"

Jenny was in ecstasies to hear Crockston speak so.

She had never dared to think of such a plan as this. To deliver her father ! And the captain and crew of the *Dolphin* were to risk their lives in the enterprise !

"Just so," added Crockston, as a "clincher;" "and this, Miss Jenny, merits some acknowledgment on your part !"

"More than a mere acknowledgment," replied the girl; "it deserves a life-long friendship."

And she immediately sought James Playfair, in order to express to him the feelings that animated her.

"That is an improvement," muttered the American. "We are coming to the point."

James Playfair was promenading the quarter-deck, and, as may be imagined, he was greatly surprised, not to say "taken aback," to see the young lady approach him, her eyes dimmed with tears of gratitude, and hold out her hand to him, saying :

"Oh ! thank you, thank you, for your extreme kindness, which I had no right to expect from a stranger."

"Miss Halliburt," replied the captain, who did not understand this, "I really am not aware——"

"But you are about to brave great danger for me," replied Miss Jenny, "and perhaps, in so doing, compromise yourself. You have been so kind already, in extending me the hospitality of your ship, to which I have no claim whatever, that——"

"Excuse me," replied James Playfair ; "but I declare I do not understand you. I have only behaved as any other gentleman would have done under similar circumstances, and my poor efforts do not deserve so much gratitude nor so many thanks."

"Mr. Playfair," said Jenny, "it is useless for you to

pretend ignorance any longer; Crockston has told me everything."

"Oh! Crockston has told you all, has he? Well, then, I can less than ever comprehend why you have come to say all this, which——"

As he spoke, the young captain became embarrassed himself. He recalled the brusque manner in which he had received Crockston's suggestions, but Jenny, fortunately for him, would not permit him to explain further, and interrupting him, she said:

"Mr. James, when I came on board your vessel I had but one idea—to get to Charleston; and once there, no matter how cruel the Southerners may be, they would not prevent a girl from sharing her father's prison. That was all. I never thought to return; but since your generosity has moved you to attempt my father's deliverance, since you wish to try to save him, be assured that you possess my deepest gratitude, and let me clasp your hand in token of my esteem."

James did not know what to do. He bit his lips, and did not venture to clasp the girl's extended hand. He perceived that Crockston had compromised him, and that escape was impossible. All the same, it did not occur to him to join a scheme for the release of Mr. Halliburt, and to take the responsibility of a very disagreeable affair upon his shoulders. But how was he to dash the hopes of this young girl? How could he refuse the hand she extended to him so thankfully? How could he change her tears of gratitude to those of grief?

So he endeavoured to reply in an evasive manner,

in order that his liberty of action might be ensured in future.

"Miss Jenny," he said, "be assured that I will do all in my power for——"

And he took the little hand in both his own, but at the gentle pressure he received his heart grew tender, his head got confused, ideas failed him, and he muttered some vague words :

"Miss—Miss Jenny—for *your* sake——"

Crockston, who was looking on, rubbed his hands, and, laughing to himself, muttered :

"It's coming, it's coming, it's coming !"

How James Playfair would have got out of this embarrassing situation of his own accord is a mystery. But fortunately for him, if not for the *Dolphin*, the voice of the look-out man was heard :

"Deck—ahoy !"

"Aye, aye !"

"A sail to windward !"

James Playfair, at this announcement, immediately left the young lady, and sprang into the mizzen shrouds.

CHAPTER V.

SHOT FROM THE "IROQUOIS," AND ARGUMENT FROM MISS JENNY.

THE *Dolphin* had been most fortunate hitherto, and had made a very rapid passage. Not a single vessel had been signalled till now.

The *Dolphin* was at this time in lat. $32^{\circ} 15'$ and long. $57^{\circ} 43'$ west of Greenwich—about three-fifths of her voyage. A fog had covered the sea during the last eight-and-forty hours, but was now lifting. If this mist had favoured the *Dolphin*, by concealing her course, it had also precluded her crew from making any observations, and it was quite possible that she might have been sailing side by side with the very ships which she should have striven to avoid.

Now this is exactly what had happened, and when the ship was signalled, she was only three miles to windward of the *Dolphin*.

When James Playfair reached the "top," he could perceive distinctly a large Federal corvette going at full steam. She was sailing so as to intercept the *Dolphin*.

The captain, having examined her carefully, came down on deck and sent for the mate.

"Mr. Mathew," said he, "what do you think of yonder vessel?"

"I think she is a Federal cruiser that has a suspicion of what we are up to," replied Mathew.

"There can be no doubt of her nationality," said the captain. "Look!"

At that moment the "stars and stripes" of the United States were displayed at the peak, and the corvette supported her colours with a cannon.

"An invitation to us to show our bunting," said Mr. Mathew. "Well, let the colours be shaken out, we have no reason to be ashamed of them."

"What is the use?" replied James Playfair. "Our flag will scarcely protect us, and it will not prevent those people from paying us a visit. No, let us go ahead."

"And quickly, too," added Mr. Mathew; "for if I am not mistaken, I have seen that corvette before in the Mersey, whither she came to have a look at our ships building; and my name is not Mathew if she be not the *Iroquois*!"

"Is she a fast sailer?"

"One of the fastest in the Federal navy."

"How many guns does she carry?"

"Eight."

"Pooh."

"Oh! don't despise them, captain," replied Mathew, in a serious tone; "amongst those eight cannons are two rifled pivot-guns—one a sixty-pounder on the poop, the other a hundred-pounder on deck forward."

"The devil!" exclaimed James Playfair. "They are Parrott's, and can carry three miles!"

"Yes, and more," replied Mathew.

"Well, Mathew, be they sixty-pounders or only four-pounders, let them carry three miles or 500 yards, it is all the same if we can sail fast enough to get out of range. We will now show this *Iroquois* how a vessel built to go can go. Coal up, Mr. Mathew."

The mate transmitted this order to the engineer, and thick, black smoke soon rose from the funnels of the steamer.

These preparations did not meet with approval on board the corvette, for she made the *Dolphin* a signal to "lie too;" but James Playfair took no notice of it, and did not alter his course.

"Now," said he, "let us see what the *Iroquois* is made of. This is a capital opportunity for her to try her hundred-pounder, and to ascertain its range. Go ahead, full speed."

"All right," said Mathew; "it will not be long before we shall be pleasantly saluted."

As he returned aft, Captain Playfair saw Miss Halliburt seated quietly near the bulwarks.

"Miss Jenny," he said, "we shall probably be chased by yonder corvette, and, as she will speak to us with cannon-shot, I must request you to accept my arm to assist you to your cabin."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Playfair," replied the girl, looking steadily at him; "but I am not afraid of shot."

"But, in spite of the distance, there is still danger," replied Playfair.

"Oh, I was not brought up a coward," said Miss Halliburt. "We are accustomed to everything in

America, and I assure you that the shot of the *Iroquois* will not make me stoop."

"You are very brave, Miss Jenny!"

"Let us suppose so, Mr. Playfair; and permit me to remain near you."

"I cannot refuse you anything, Miss Halliburt," replied the captain, as he gazed at the quiet, determined face before him.

Scarcely had he spoken, when they perceived a puff of white smoke burst from the hull of the corvette, and, before the noise of the report could reach them, a conical projectile came whizzing towards the *Dolphin* with fearful rapidity. It was not so very difficult to follow its course, for projectiles travel with less velocity from rifled than from smooth-bore guns.

At about twenty fathoms from the *Dolphin* the shot—now with abated force—struck the water, then recocheted over the ship, and, grazing the fore-yardarm, plunged into the sea beyond.

"The deuce!" exclaimed Playfair. "We must look alive; such another shot must not be waited for."

"They will take some little time to reload," said Mathew.

"Faith, this is interesting!" said Crockston, who, with folded arms, was calmly looking on—apparently a disinterested spectator. "And those are friends, too, who are sending us these compliments!"

"Oh, is that you?" cried James Playfair, looking the American up and down.

"It is I, captain!" replied the American, calmly. "I have come to see how these Federals shoot. Not badly, either; not at all badly."

The captain was about to return an angry reply, but a second projectile, striking the water on the starboard quarter, prevented him.

"Good," said Playfair, "we have already gained two cables' lengths on that *Iroquois*. Your friends sail like a buoy, Master Crockston ; do you hear?"

"I do not deny it," replied the American, "and, for the first time in my life, it pleases me."

A third shot now fell still further astern than its predecessor, and in less than ten minutes the *Dolphin* was out of range.

"That is worth all the patent logs in the world, Mr. Mathew," said James Playfair ; "and, thanks to those shots, we know how to regulate our speed. Now bank up the fires, for it is absurd to burn coal uselessly."

"You command a capital vessel," said Miss Halliburt to the young captain.

"Yes, Miss Jenny, my brave *Dolphin* swims at seventeen knots, and before the day has passed we shall have that corvette hull down."

James Playfair did not exaggerate the sailing powers of his vessel ; for before sunset the masts of the corvette had disappeared below the horizon.

This incident enabled the captain to study Miss Halliburt's character in a new light. Now the ice was broken. Henceforth, during the whole of the voyage, interviews were long and frequent between the captain of the *Dolphin* and his passenger. He found her determined, calm, thoughtful and intelligent, speaking with great frankness, as American ladies do ; possessing well-formed notions on most subjects, and venting her opinions with a conviction that, unknown to James

Playfair, penetrated his heart. She loved her country, was zealous for the Union, and expressed herself upon the subject of the then existing war with an enthusiasm of which no other woman could have been capable. More than once James Playfair was puzzled to reply to her. From a mercantile point of view, even Miss Jenny assailed him no less vigorously, and would not come to any terms. James argued much at first. He tried to sustain the Confederate against the Federal cause, to prove that the Secessionists had right on their side, and that people who had voluntarily united with others could voluntarily dis sever themselves again. But the young lady would not yield to this ; she demonstrated that the slavery question was the primary one in this contest between North and South, that it concerned morality and humanity more than politics, and James was vanquished without the power to reply. Besides, in all these discussions, he preferred to listen. It is impossible to say whether he was more touched by Miss Halliburt's arguments, or by the charming way in which they were expressed ; but at length he did confess, amongst other things, that slavery was a principal question in this war, and that it was necessary to put an end to it definitively, and to abolish these remaining horrors of barbarous times.

For the rest, as has been stated, the political opinions of the captain did not trouble him very greatly. He would have relinquished his firmest convictions in the face of arguments so enticingly advanced. He let his ideas on these subjects go very cheaply, but at length the "merchant" in him was attacked, and his dearest interests were assailed, on the question of the business

on which the *Dolphin* was engaged, and the supply of munitions to the Confederates.

"Yes, Mr. James," said Miss Halliburt to him one day, "my gratitude cannot prevent me from speaking to you with perfect frankness. On the contrary. You are a brave sailor, an able merchant. The house of Playfair is known for its honourable dealings; but, at this moment, it is untrue to its principles, and is following a line of business unworthy of it."

"How?" cried James. "Has not the house of Playfair the right to attempt such a commercial undertaking?"

"No," replied Miss Halliburt. "You are carrying the munitions of war to the people who are in open rebellion against the appointed government of their country, and you are lending arms to an unworthy cause."

"Faith, Miss Jenny! I will not discuss the rights of the Confederates with you. I will only give you one answer: I am a merchant, and as such I can only look after the interests of my house. I seek to gain wherever there is a chance to obtain it."

"That is the very point where you are to be blamed, Mr. James," replied Miss Halliburt. "The gain is no excuse. Thus, when you sell opium to the Chinese to stupefy them, you are as culpable as now, when you are furnishing to the Southerners the means to continue a criminal war."

"Oh, Miss Jenny! that is too much this time, and I cannot admit it."

"No, what I say is right; and, when you begin to reflect, you will comprehend the part you are playing;

when you consider the results for which, in the eyes of everyone, you will be responsible, you will confess that I am right on this point, as well as upon so many others."

James Playfair was regularly struck dumb. He left the young lady, and, in an angry mood, went to his duty, for he felt his inability to reply. After sulking for half-an-hour, like a child, in about an hour he returned to the society of that singular girl who was able to upset his strongest arguments with such an amiable smile.

In short, however, it came to pass—and, even, although he would not admit it—Captain Playfair was no longer his own master—he was no longer captain of his own ship!

So, to the delight of Crockston, Mr. Halliburt's business appeared to be in good train. The captain seemed to have made up his mind to do all he could to release Jenny's father; but ought he for this to compromise the *Dolphin*, his cargo, his crew, and to draw down upon himself the animadversions of his uncle Vincent?

CHAPTER VI.

SULLIVAN ISLAND CHANNEL.

Two days after the encounter with the *Iroquois* the *Dolphin* met with a violent squall off the Bermudas. These islands are frequently visited by tremendous storms. They are notorious for shipwrecks, and it is here that Shakspeare placed the scene of the "Tempest," in which play Ariel and Caliban dispute for the sovereignty of the sea.

The storm was so terrific that James Playfair at one time thought of running for shelter to the Bermudas, where the English have a military post, but that would have been very disappointing, and given rise to regret. The *Dolphin* fortunately behaved wonderfully well, and, after scudding before the wind for one day, Playfair was able to resume his course.

But if the captain was satisfied with the behaviour of his ship, he was not less pleased with the courage and coolness of the young lady on board. Miss Halliburt had stood at his side during the wildest hours of the tempest, and James now perceived that a deep, powerful, and altogether irresistible affection for her had taken possession of him.

"Yes," he thought, "this brave girl is commander here. She turns me at her will as the waves toss a deserted vessel. I am foundering—I feel it. What will Uncle Vincent say? What a weak fellow I am! Why, I am sure that if Jenny wished me to throw all this contraband cargo overboard, I would do so for love of her!"

Fortunately for the house of Playfair and Company, Miss Halliburt did not insist upon such a sacrifice. Nevertheless, the poor captain was very "hard hit," and Crockston, who read Playfair's heart "like a book," rubbed his hands hard enough to rub all the skin off.

"We've got him, we've got him," he repeated to himself, "and before eight days are over my master will be quietly installed in the best cabin of the *Dolphin*."

Whether Miss Jenny was aware of the sentiments she had inspired, and permitted herself to share them, no one could say, and James Playfair least of anyone. The lady maintained a strict reserve on this point, in accordance with maidenly traditions, and her secret remained buried in her bosom.

But while love made such rapid progress in the heart of the young captain, the *Dolphin* proceeded with no less rapidity towards Charleston.

On the 13th January the look-out man signalled land ten miles to the south-west. The coast was low and almost on a level with the sea-line. Crockston examined the horizon attentively, and about nine A.M., indicating a point, he exclaimed:

"There is Charleston lighthouse!"

Had the *Dolphin* arrived off the coast during the night, this lighthouse, placed upon Morris Island, and

140 feet above the level of the sea, would have been visible for many hours, for the light can be perceived for a distance of fourteen miles.

Now that the position of the *Dolphin* had been determined, James Playfair had only to make up his mind by which channel he would enter Charleston Bay.

"If we meet with no impediment," he said, "we shall be safely in the docks before three o'clock."

Charleston is situated at the end of an estuary seven miles long and two miles wide, which is called Charleston Harbour, and is difficult of access. This harbour is enclosed between Morris and Sullivan Islands, lying to the south and north respectively. At the time the *Dolphin* came to break the blockade, Morris Island was already held by the Federals, and General Gilmore had established batteries which commanded the roadstead. Sullivan Island, on the contrary, was in the hands of the Confederates, who held Fort Moultrie, situated at its extremity. It was, therefore, necessary for the *Dolphin* to hug the northern shore, so as to keep out of range of the Federal guns.

There were five channels by which the estuary might be entered, viz., the Sullivan Island channel, the "Overall," the main passage, the North channel, and, finally, the Lawford channel; but the last was out of the question, unless a skilful local pilot was on board any ship attempting it, and then her draught must be only seven feet. As the Northern and Overall channels were enfiladed by the Federal batteries, they were practically impassable. If James Playfair could have had his choice he would have taken the principal channel, which is the

best, and whose bearings are easy to follow; but it was necessary to yield to circumstances, and to decide accordingly. Besides, the captain of the *Dolphin* knew perfectly the secrets of this bay—its dangers, the depth at low water, the currents, &c.; and was quite capable of navigating his ship through in safety so soon as he could enter one of the straits. But the difficulty lay in getting there, and to accomplish this end successfully demanded considerable nautical experience and a thorough knowledge of the sailing qualities of the *Dolphin*.

Two Federal frigates were then cruising off Charleston, and Mr. Mathew drew Playfair's attention to them.

"They are preparing to inquire our business here," said he.

"Well, then, we shall not answer them," replied the captain; "and their curiosity must remain unsatisfied."

Meanwhile the cruisers were approaching the *Dolphin* full speed, while she continued her course, taking very good care to keep out of range. But to gain time, Playfair put her head to the south-west, so as to put the frigates off their guard. They really believed that the *Dolphin* was making for the Morris Island channel, but as on Morris Island were Federal batteries, which could easily sink the British ship if necessary, the Federal vessels merely "kept their eyes on her," without attempting close pursuit.

So the respective positions of the ships for an hour or so remained unchanged. James Playfair, in order to deceive the cruisers, had moderated the play of the slide-valves, and was only proceeding at half speed; while the volumes of smoke which escaped from the chimneys

he hoped would give the enemy the idea that he was doing his best.

"They will be somewhat surprised very soon," said Playfair, "when we quietly slip through their fingers."

So when the *Dolphin* was near enough to Morris Island, and facing a battery whose range he was unacquainted with, he suddenly went about, and turning the vessel, as on a pivot, bore away to the north, leaving the cruisers two miles to windward. They now saw the *Dolphin's* "little game," and began to steam resolutely in pursuit. But too late! The *Dolphin* redoubled her speed, the distance between them rapidly increasing as she approached the coast. Some shots were sent after her, to quiet the Federal conscience, but the projectiles fell short. At eleven o'clock the steamer was run under Sullivan Island, thanks to her small draught of water, and went at full steam into the narrow passage. There she was in safety, for no Federal cruiser would dare to follow her into a channel having only eleven feet of water at low tide.

"Well!" cried Crockston, "so it is not more difficult than that!"

"Oh! indeed, Master Crockston! But the difficulty is not so much to enter as to get out again," said James Playfair.

"Bah!" replied the American, "that does not trouble me. With such a vessel as the *Dolphin*, and a captain like James Playfair, one can come and go as he pleases!"

Nevertheless, James Playfair, glass in hand, scanned the channel attentively. He had before him excellent charts, which enabled him to proceed without fear or hesitation.

Once he had got his ship safely into the narrow channel running along Sullivan Island, James Playfair bore up for Fort Moultrie—west, half north—until the Castle of Pickney, easily distinguishable by its sombre appearance, and situated upon the isle called Shute's Folly, showed to the N.N.E. On the other side he held Fort Johnston, which rose two degrees north of Fort Sumter.

He was now saluted by a few shots from the batteries on Morris Island, which did not reach him, and he continued his course steadily past Moultrieville, which is situated at the end of Sullivan Island, and entered the bay.

Fort Sumter was then soon left to larboard, and the steamer was protected by it from the Federal batteries.

This fort, so celebrated in the civil war, is situated three miles from Charleston, and about a mile from each side of the bay. It is a truncated pentagon in form, built upon an artificial island of Massachusetts granite, the construction of which took ten years, and cost more than \$900,000.*

It was from hence that Anderson and the Federal troops were driven, and the first fire of the seceders was directed against this fort. The quantity of metal showered down upon it by the Federals during the war is incalculable. Nevertheless, for three years it held out, but some months after the passage of the *Dolphin* it fell beneath the fire of the 300-pounder Parrott guns, which General Gilmore brought to bear on it from Morris Island.

But at the time we speak of it was intact, and the

* About £180,000.

Confederate flag floated proudly above it. Having passed the fort, Charleston appeared, lying between the banks of the Ashley and Cooper rivers and an advanced point in the roadstead.

James Playfair threaded his way amid the buoys which marked the channel, leaving the lighthouse to the S.S.E., behind Morris Island. He had hoisted British colours at the peak, and steamed with wonderful speed through the narrows.

As soon as he had passed quarantine buoy he boldly made for the centre of the harbour. Miss Halliburt was on the poop, gazing at the town in which her father was a prisoner, and her eyes filled with tears.

At length the speed of the steamer was slackened, the *Dolphin* ran along by the southern and eastern batteries, and was soon moored alongside the quay at the North Commercial Wharf.

CHAPTER VII.

A SOUTHERN GENERAL.

WHEN the *Dolphin* came alongside the quay she was greeted by the cheers of a numerous crowd. The inhabitants of this town, strictly blockaded by sea, were not accustomed to the visits of European vessels. They wondered what business this large English steamer had in their waters. But when the object of her voyage became known, and why she had "run" the Sullivan Channel—when it became whispered that she carried a cargo contraband of war—the plaudits knew no bounds, and the cheering was redoubled.

James Playfair put himself in communication with General Beauregard without loss of time. He joyfully welcomed the young captain of the *Dolphin*, who came in the nick of time to supply the troops with the clothing and munitions of which they were so much in want. The unloading of the ship was agreed to immediately, and help was freely extended to the crew of the *Dolphin* in this respect.

Before quitting his vessel James Playfair had received most pressing injunctions respecting Miss Halliburt's

father. The young captain was entirely at the young lady's service.

"Miss Jenny," he had said, "you may depend upon me ; I will do my very best to assist your father, but I hope that this affair will not be so very difficult. I am going to see General Beauregard to-day, and though I shall not ask for Mr. Halliburt's liberty at once, I will ascertain how he is situated, whether in prison or on parole."

"My poor father !" said Jenny with a sigh, "little does he think that his daughter is so near. If I could only fly to his arms !"

"Have patience, Miss Jenny. You shall soon embrace your father. You may count upon my devotion ; but I must act also prudently and with caution."

That is why James Playfair, faithful to his promise, having got through his business for the house, delivered the cargo to the general, and bargained for an immense stock of cotton at a very low rate, turned the conversation to current topics.

"So," said he to General Beauregard, "you believe in the success of the slaveholders ?"

"I have not a doubt of our ultimate success ; and as far as Charleston is concerned, Lee's army will soon relieve us. Besides, what can you expect from the enemy ? Admitting, for the sake of argument, that Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi fall into their hands, what then ? Will they be able to occupy their conquests ? Certainly not ; and in my opinion, if they ever be victorious, they will be very much embarrassed by their victory."

"And are you quite sure of your troops ?" asked the

captain. "Are you not afraid that Charleston will not put up with a siege that ruins her?"

"No, I have no fear of treason. Besides, traitors would be sacrificed without mercy, and I would destroy the town with fire and sword myself did I perceive any Unionist tendencies. Jefferson Davis has confided Charleston to me, and you may depend upon it that Charleston is in safe keeping."

"Have you any Federal prisoners?" asked James Playfair, coming to the point.

"Yes, captain," replied the general. "At Charleston the first shot was fired. The abolitionists who were here at the time resisted, and, having been overcome, were made prisoners of war."

"Have you many of them?"

"About one hundred."

"Free, in the town?"

"They were free until one day when I discovered a plot amongst them. Their chief had managed to establish communications with the assailants, who were kept informed of the state of things in the town. I was then obliged to lock up these dangerous guests, and many of them will only quit their prisons to ascend the glacis yonder, where a few Confederate bullets will put an end to their Federalism."

"What, shot?" exclaimed the young captain, with a shudder.

"Yes, and their ringleader first of all. A very determined fellow, and most dangerous in a beleaguered town. I have forwarded his correspondence to the President at Richmond, and before eight days are over his lot will be cast."

"Who is this man?" asked James Playfair, with the utmost carelessness.

"A Boston journalist, a fierce abolitionist—Lincoln's sworn instrument!"

"And his name is——?"

"Jonathan Halliburt."

"Poor fellow!" said James, repressing his emotion. "No matter what he has done, I cannot help pitying him. And you think he will be shot?"

"I am sure he will," replied Beauregard. "What can you expect? War is war! We must defend ourselves as best we can."

"At any rate it cannot concern me," replied the captain; "for, when this execution takes place, I shall be far away from here."

"What, are you thinking of sailing so soon?"

"Yes, general, business first. So soon as my cargo of cotton is stowed I shall be off. I have got up to Charleston. So far, so good. But I have got to get away again; there is where the shoe pinches! The *Dolphin* is a staunch vessel—she can outstrip all the Federal cruisers; but, however speedy she may be, she does not pretend to distance a hundred-pounder shot, and a projectile in the hull would not tend to bring my venture to a happy termination."

"Just as you please, captain," replied Beauregard. "I cannot advise you under the circumstances. You know your own business best. In your place I should doubtless act as you are doing. Besides, Charleston is not a very pleasant place to remain in, for it rains shells three days out of four, and is not a port of shelter for a ship. So you must sail when you like. But, answer me

one question : what number and weight of vessels have the Federals before Charleston ? ”

James Playfair gave the general the best information in his power, and took his leave on very good terms. He then returned to the *Dolphin* in a very thoughtful mood, and much depressed at what he had heard.

“What am I to say to Jenny?” he thought. “Ought I to tell her in what a terrible situation Mr. Halliburt is? Would it not be better to leave her in ignorance of the danger that threatens her father? Poor girl !”

He had not proceeded fifty paces from the governor’s house when he ran against Crockston. The American had been watching him.

“Well, captain ?”

James Playfair looked at Crockston fixedly, and the latter perceived that there was no good news to be told.

“You have seen Beauregard, then ?”

“Yes,” replied the captain.

“And have spoken to him about Mr. Halliburt?”

“No, he spoke to me about him.”

“Well, captain ?”

“Well, I may tell you all, Crockston, I suppose, eh?”

“All, captain.”

“Well, then, General Beauregard told me that your master will be shot within eight days.”

At such intelligence as this any man but Crockston would have been enraged, or given way to grief. But the American, who never had doubts about anything, had a smile on his face as he replied :

“Bah ! What does that matter ?”

“What does it matter if Mr. Halliburt be shot in

eight days?" exclaimed James Playfair. "You ask 'What does it matter?'"

"Yes, certainly—if in six days he is on board the *Dolphin*, and if in seven the *Dolphin* is out at sea?"

"Quite right," said the captain, pressing Crockston's hand. "I understand, my good fellow! You are a man of resolution; and I, despite Uncle Vincent and the cargo of the *Dolphin*, will throw myself overboard for Miss Jenny."

"It will not be necessary to throw anyone overboard," replied the American; "that will do no good to anybody, except the fish. The main point is to set Mr. Halliburt free."

"But do you consider the difficulty?"

"Pooh!" replied Crockston.

"We must establish communication with the prisoner, who is well guarded."

"Of course!"

"And aid him in an almost miraculous escape."

"Bah!" replied Crockston. "A prisoner is always thinking more of escape than his gaoler is of keeping him in prison. So a prisoner ought always to succeed in an attempt to escape. All the chances are in his favour. That is the reason why, thanks to our assistance, Mr. Halliburt will get away."

"You are right, Crockston."

"Always right."

"But how will you act? You must have some plan, and there are many precautions to be taken."

"I will think over it."

"But when Miss Jenny becomes acquainted with the fact that her father is condemned to death, and

that the order for his execution may arrive any day——?”

“She will know nothing about it, that’s all.”

“Yes, let her remain in ignorance. It will be better for all parties.”

“Where is Mr. Halliburt confined?” inquired Crockston.

“In the citadel,” replied James Playfair.

“All right. Shall we go aboard now?”

“Yes, we had better go off to the ship, Crockston.”

CHAPTER VIII

THE ESCAPE.

MISS HALLIBURT was seated on the poop, awaiting the return of James Playfair with the utmost impatience. When he came on board she could not speak, but her eyes interrogated Playfair more eloquently than her lips could have done.

The captain, with Crockston's assistance, informed the young lady of the particulars relative to her father's imprisonment. He said that he had cautiously opened the subject with Beauregard, but the general was not well disposed towards the prisoners, so he considered it better to keep quiet and reflect upon the circumstances.

"Since Mr. Halliburt is not free in the town, his escape offers greater difficulties ; but I will accomplish my task ; and I swear to you, Miss Jenny, that the *Dolphin* shall not leave Charleston without your father on board."

"Thank you, Mr. James," said Jenny ; "I thank you with my whole heart."

At these words James Playfair felt his heart beat joyfully. He approached the young girl with tearful eyes and tremulous lips. Perhaps he was about to

express the sentiments he could no longer restrain, when Crockston interfered.

"That is not all," he said, "and this is no time for grief. We must talk, and to some purpose."

"Have you any plan, Crockston?" asked Miss Halliburt.

"I have always a plan," replied the American; "that is my nature."

"But a good plan?" asked Playfair.

"Excellent. All the senate at Washington could not imagine a better. It is as good as having Mr. Halliburt already on board."

Crockston spoke with such assurance and good nature, that it was impossible not to partake of his conviction.

"We are all attention, Crockston," said James Playfair.

"Well, then, captain, you must go to General Beauregard, and ask a favour which he will not refuse you."

"And that favour is——?"

"You must tell him that you have a regular scamp on board, who has been very troublesome during the voyage, and excited the ship's company to mutiny; and you must ask permission to incarcerate him in the citadel, on the condition that when you are about to sail he must be restored to you, in order that he may be handed over to justice on your arrival in England."

"Capital," replied James Playfair, smiling. "I will do so; and Beauregard will accede willingly to my request."

"I am sure he will," replied the American.

"But," replied Playfair, "one thing is needful."

"What is that?"

"The scamp."

"He is before you, captain."

"What, this terrible rebel——?"

"Is myself; don't worry about that."

"Oh! you brave, generous man," cried Jenny, pressing the horny hands of the American between her soft palms.

"Go, Crockston," said Playfair. "I understand you now, and I only regret that I cannot take your place."

"Everyone has his part to perform," replied Crockston. "If you were to take my place you would be ill at ease, and I shall not be. You will have enough to do later to escape the cannon of Confederates and Federals, which exploit I should not succeed in."

"Yes, Crockston; go ahead."

"Well, once in the citadel—I know it—I shall see what is to be done; but rest assured I will do my best. Meantime you must proceed with the loading of your vessel."

"Oh! business is now a secondary consideration," said Playfair.

"Not at all. Think of Uncle Vincent; what would he say? Let sentiment and business go hand in hand; that will defy suspicion. But we must make haste. Can you be ready in six days?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, the *Dolphin* must be loaded and ready to sail during the 22nd."

"She shall be ready."

"On the evening of the 22nd send a boat with your

best men to White Point, at the end of the town. Wait until nine o'clock, and you will see Mr. Halliburt and your humble servant."

"But how will you aid Mr. Halliburt, and also escape yourself?"

"That is my affair."

"Dear Crockston," said Jenny, "you will risk your life in order to save my father."

"Don't you trouble about me, miss," replied Crockston. "I run no risk whatever, you may believe."

"Well," asked Playfair, "when must we imprison you?"

"This very day. You understand I am demoralising your crew. There is no time to be lost."

"Do you want any money? It may be useful in the citadel."

"Money to bribe a gaoler! No, it would be too dear a job, and too foolish. When it comes to that the gaoler takes care of the money and the prisoner also. And he is right. No, I can employ a surer method. However, a few dollars may be useful. It will be necessary, perhaps, to drink on occasion."

"And make the turnkey tipsy?"

"No, a drunken gaoler will spoil all. No, I have my idea, and let me work it out."

"All right, my brave Crockston; here are ten dollars."

"It is more than enough; but I will bring back the change."

"Well now, are you ready?"

"Quite prepared to be a regular scamp."

"Let us be off, then."

"Crockston," said Miss Halliburt in an agitated tone, "Crockston, you are the best man that ever lived."

"I am not surprised to hear that," replied the American with a loud laugh. "Ah, by-the-by, captain, there is one important thing."

"What is that?"

"If the general proposes to hang this rebel—military men like sharp work, you know——"

"Yes."

"Well, then, you must ask time to think about it."

"I promise you I will."

So in the afternoon, to the great astonishment of the crew who were not in the secret, Crockston, heavily ironed, was landed under the guard of a party of marines; and half-an-hour later the rebel was escorted through the streets, and, notwithstanding his resistance, was incarcerated in the citadel of Charleston.

During that and the following days the discharge of the *Dolphin's* cargo was pressed forward rapidly. The steam cranes lifted the European cargo out, to make room for the American crop. The population of the town assisted the ship's company in this very interesting operation. The crew were looked up to very much—the Southerners held them in great esteem; but James Playfair gave them no time to accept the courtesies of the Americans. He was constantly superintending them, and pressed the work forward at a pace the cause for which the sailors did not suspect.

Three days after, on the 18th of January, the first bales of cotton were stowed in the hold. Although James Playfair did not think about it, the house of Playfair was making a first-rate bargain, having procured at a very low price the cotton lying on the wharves of Charleston.

All this time no news of Crockston had been received. Jenny, although she made no complaint, was a prey to the most intense anxiety. Her face betrayed her, and James Playfair hastened to reassure her.

"I have every confidence in Crockston," he said. "He is a most devoted servant. You know him better than I do, Miss Jenny; and you ought to be quite assured. In three days your father will clasp you to his heart, take my word for it."

"Ah! Mr. James," cried Jenny, "how can I ever repay such devotion? How will my father and I ever find means to discharge our debt of gratitude to you?"

"I will tell you when we are once more in British waters," replied the captain.

Jenny looked at him for a moment; her eyes dropped and filled with tears. She then returned to her cabin.

James Playfair was in hopes that until her father was in safety Jenny would not become aware of his danger, but the involuntary indiscretion of a sailor apprised her of the truth.

The answer from the Richmond cabinet had arrived on the previous day by a courier. This reply contained Jonathan Halliburt's death-warrant, and the unhappy man was sentenced to be shot next morning. The report of the approaching execution soon spread through the town, and was carried on board by one of the sailors of the *Dolphin*. The man informed the captain without reflecting that Miss Halliburt was within hearing. The girl uttered a piercing scream, and fell senseless to the deck. James Playfair carried her to her cabin, and the most assiduous care was required to restore her to consciousness.

When she opened her eyes she perceived the young captain, who, with his fingers on his lips, enjoined absolute silence. She was obliged to acquiesce and to restrain her grief, and James Playfair, bending over her, whispered :

“Jenny, in two hours your father will be amongst us in safety, or we shall have perished in the attempt to set him free.”

He then went up to the poop, muttering, “Now we must get him off at any risk, as I must pay for his liberty with my life and with the lives of my crew.”

The hour for action had arrived. The *Dolphin* had that morning completed her load of cotton, and her coal-bunkers were full also. In two hours he could start. James Playfair had cast off from the North Commercial Wharf, and moored in the roadstead, so as to be ready to take advantage of the flood tide at nine o'clock P.M.

The clock was striking seven when Playfair quitted Miss Halliburt, and he at once began to prepare for his expedition. Up to this time the secret had been religiously kept by the trio, but now it was necessary that Mr. Mathew should be made acquainted with it, and he was accordingly informed.

“At your orders,” was Mathew’s reply, without making any observation. “And for nine o’clock, is it?”

“For nine o’clock ; yes. Get the fires lighted at once, and a good head of steam up.”

“It shall be done,” replied Mathew.

“The *Dolphin* is held by a single anchor. We must cut the rope and be off without losing a second.”

“All right.”

“Place a lantern at the main-mast head. The night is very dark, and a fog is rising. We must not run the

risk of losing our way on our return. You had better ring the starting-bell at nine o'clock also."

"Your orders shall be punctually carried out, captain."

"Now, Mr. Mathew," added James Playfair, "pipe away the gig and six of our best hands. I am about to start for White Point at once. I commend Miss Halliburt to your care during my absence, and may Heaven shield us!"

"Amen!" replied Mathew, solemnly.

Then he proceeded to give the necessary orders. In a few minutes the gig was manned. James Playfair, having taken farewell of Jenny, descended to the boat, and had the satisfaction of observing the smoke escaping from the funnel as he pushed off.

The darkness was intense, the wind had dropped, and absolute silence reigned all around the extensive harbour, whose waters seemed to sleep. A few indistinct lights glimmered in the fog. James Playfair took the tiller, and with a steady hand steered for White Point. The distance was about two miles. During the day Playfair had carefully taken the bearings, in order that he might make for Charleston Point direct.

Eight o'clock was sounding from St. Philip's Church when the gig touched White Point. There was still an hour to wait till the time fixed by Crockston. The quay was absolutely deserted. Only the sentinel of the southern and eastern batteries was on guard. James Playfair was very impatient, for the minutes passed to him but slowly.

At half-past eight he heard footsteps approaching. He got his crew in readiness to start, and advanced to see who the new-comers were. But after ten paces he encountered a band of the coast-guard. James drew his

revolver, and was ready to use it if necessary. But what could he do against the coast-guard ?

The leader of the party came up to him, and, seeing the gig, demanded :

“What boat is that ?”

“The *Dolphin's* gig,” replied Playfair.

“And you are—— ?”

“Captain James Playfair.”

“I thought you had started before this, and were already half-way to sea.”

“I am ready to start, and indeed I ought to be now at sea, but——”

“Well—but what ?” insisted the coast-guard.

An idea suddenly struck James Playfair, and he replied :

“One of my crew is incarcerated in the citadel, and, by Jove ! I had nearly forgotten it. Fortunately I remembered him in time, and I have sent my men up to fetch him.”

“Ah ! that is the rascal you want to take back to England ?”

“Yes.”

“You might as well have him hanged here as there,” said the coast-guard, laughing at his own joke.

“I think so, too,” replied Playfair ; “but it is as well that these things should proceed regularly.”

“Well, I wish you luck, and take care of the batteries on Morris Island.”

“Oh ! all right ! I got in, and I hope to get out again in safety.”

“Safe journey to you.”

“Thanks !”

And then the coast-guard proceeded on their rounds, and the shore was again silent.

Just then nine o'clock struck. This was the time fixed. James felt his heart beating violently. A whistle was heard. James answered in a similar manner and waited, listening with his hand to his ear, and enjoining absolute silence on his crew. A man appeared, wrapped in a large cloak, and looking about him as he came nearer. James ran up to him.

"Mr. Halliburt?" said he.

"Yes, 'tis I," replied the man.

"Thank God!" cried Playfair. "Get into the boat at once. Where is Crockston?"

"Crockston!" exclaimed Mr. Halliburt, apparently stupefied. "What do you mean?"

"The person who has set you free, and conducted you hither, is your servant Crockston."

"The man who accompanied me here is the gaoler of the citadel," replied Mr. Halliburt.

"The gaoler!" exclaimed Playfair.

He evidently knew nothing about the facts, and a thousand fears assailed him.

"Of course, the gaoler!" cried a well-known voice.

"The gaoler is sleeping sound in my cell!"

"Crockston, can it be you, indeed?" exclaimed Mr. Halliburt.

"Excuse me, sir, we have no time for explanations now. Your life is the great question at present; embark at once."

The three men took their places in the gig.

"Give way, men," said the captain.

The six rowers bent to their work, and the gig glided like a fish over the dark waters of Charleston harbour.

CHAPTER IX.

BETWEEN TWO FIRES.

THE gig, impelled by six stout oarsmen, flew over the waters of the harbour. The fog grew denser, and James Playfair could with difficulty maintain the line of his bearings. Crockston took up his position in the bow of the boat, and Mr. Halliburt sat beside the captain in the stern sheets. The late prisoner, who had till just then been in ignorance of the presence of his servant, wanted to speak to him ; but Crockston, by a gesture, imposed silence.

Nevertheless, Crockston himself, a few minutes later, knowing what thoughts were uppermost in the mind of Mr. Halliburt, said :

“ Yes, my dear master, the gaoler is in my place in the cell, where I just gave him a couple of blows, one on the head and the other in the “wind” as a narcotic—and all this as he brought in my supper. Was not that real gratitude? I took possession of his clothes and his keys, went in search of you, conducted you out of the citadel under the very noses of the guard, and that’s all ! ”

“ But where is my daughter ? ” asked Mr. Halliburt.

"On board the vessel which is about to carry you to England," replied Crockston.

"My daughter—there!" cried Halliburt, rising from his seat.

"Silence," replied Crockston. "Wait a few moments more, and we shall be safe!"

The boat kept on her rapid course through the darkness, but rather at a venture, as James Playfair could not yet perceive the lanterns of the *Dolphin*. He was uncertain in which direction to steer, and the gloom was so great that the rowers could not see beyond the blades of the oars.

"Well, Mr. James?" said Crockston.

"We ought to have made a mile and a half by this time," replied the captain. "Can you see anything, Crockston?"

"Nothing, and yet I have pretty good eyes. But, bah! we shall arrive safe and sound. They do not suspect anything over there!"

Scarcely had these words been uttered, when a rocket pierced the darkness, and ascended to a tremendous height.

"That's a signal," said James Playfair.

"The devil!" exclaimed Crockston. "It must have gone up from the citadel. Let us wait and see."

A second and, quickly, a third rocket was sent up after the first, and almost immediately the same signal was repeated a mile ahead of the boat.

"That is from Fort Sumter," said Crockston, "and is the warning for an escape. Pull away, men; all is discovered."

"Give way, my lads, give way!" cried Playfair.

"Those rockets have cleared up our course. The *Dolphin* is only eight hundred yards ahead. Listen ! I can hear the bell on board. Now, then, send her up ! Twenty pounds if we are there in five minutes !"

The sailors pulled the gig almost out of the water. The hearts of all on board beat fast. A cannon was discharged from the town, and the shot passed within a few fathoms of the boat, and Crockston fancied he could see the ball.

The bell on board the *Dolphin* was now distinctly audible. They rapidly approached. A few more strokes and they were alongside. A minute afterwards, Jenny was clasped in her father's arms.

The gig was hauled up at once, and James Playfair hurried aft.

"Mr. Mathew, is steam up ?"

"Yes, sir."

"Cut the cable, then, and go ahead full speed."

In a few moments the twin screws were impelling the steamer towards the main channel, in the direction of Fort Sumter.

"Mr. Mathew," said James, "we must not take the Sullivan Channel, else we shall fall under the Confederate fire at once. Let us steer as far as possible to starboard, out of range of the Federal batteries. Have you a steady hand at the helm ?"

"Yes, sir."

"Put out all lights on board. The reflection of the furnaces are quite enough to betray us ; but we cannot help that."

Meanwhile the *Dolphin* was going at a great pace ; but in manœuvring to get to the right of Charleston

Harbour, she had been obliged to follow a channel leading her for the moment towards Fort Sumter ; and scarcely had she made half a mile when the battery opened fire, and a storm of shot passed just ahead of the steamer with a tremendous noise.

"Too soon, you lubbers !" cried James Playfair, laughing. "Push on, push on, engineers. We shall be taken between two fires else."

The stokers heaped on coal, and the *Dolphin* trembled all over under the beat of the engines, which throbbed as if they would dislocate her timbers.

Just then another roar was heard, and another hail of projectiles hissed across the wake of the ship.

"Too late, you fools, too late !" cried the young captain, with a loud laugh.

Crockston, who was standing on the poop, said, "That's one passed. A few minutes more and we shall have done with the Confederates."

"So you think we have nothing more to fear from Fort Sumter ?" said James.

"Nothing," replied Crockston, "and everything from Fort Moultrie, at the end of Sullivan Island ; but they will only be able to tackle us for half a minute, and must take precious good aim if they expect to hit us. We are getting near."

"Good ; the position of Fort Moultrie will enable us to go right ahead for the main channel. So fire away."

It seemed as if James had given the order to the fort, for a triple line of fire broke out, a tremendous crash was heard, and then a "tearing" sound rose on board the steamer.

"Hit this time," said Crockston.

"Mr. Mathew!" cried the captain, "what have they done?"

"Smashed the jib-boom," replied the mate, who was at his post, forward.

"Anyone hurt?"

"No, sir."

"Well, then, let the boom go to Davy Jones. Steady now; steer straight for the island."

"We have got clear of the Confeds now!" cried Crockston; "and if we must have a shot in our hull, I would rather have the Federal balls. They are more easy of digestion."

But the *Dolphin* was by no means out of danger, for if Morris Island was not armed with the heavy guns that were mounted some months later, those that were then in position could easily sink such a ship as the *Dolphin*.

The alarm had been communicated to the Federals on the island and to the blockading ships by the fire of Forts Sumter and Moultrie. The besiegers could not understand this night attack, which was not apparently directed against them; but they held themselves in readiness to respond, nevertheless.

This idea passed through Playfair's mind as he made for the passes of Morris Island, and his fears were not without foundation, for in a quarter of an hour the darkness was illuminated, and a shower of small "shell" fell around the steamer, throwing the water up in jets as high as the bulwarks. Some even fell upon the deck of the *Dolphin*, but on their bases, which saved the ship from certain destruction. As was discovered later, these shells were intended to burst into a hundred pieces, and

each to cover an area of about 100 square feet with Greek fire, which nothing could subdue, and which would burn for twenty minutes. { A single shell could destroy a vessel. Fortunately for the *Dolphin*, this invention was comparatively novel, and therefore imperfect. Once discharged, a false rotatory motion kept them inclined, and when they fell they fell upon their bases, instead of on their apex, where the percussion mixture was. This error in construction alone saved the *Dolphin* from certain destruction. The fall of the shells did her no great harm, and under her full pressure she continued to advance.

In spite of the captain's orders, Mr. Halliburt and his daughter now came to join Playfair on the poop. He wished them to return to their cabin, but Jenny declared she would remain near the captain. As soon as Mr. Halliburt became acquainted with all the noble conduct of his preserver, he clasped his hand warmly, but, overcome by his feelings, he could not utter a word of thanks.

The *Dolphin* continued to steam at a great rate towards the ocean, and only three miles remained between her and the Atlantic ; if the channel were free, the vessel was safe. James Playfair was wonderfully well acquainted with the intricacies of Charleston harbour, and he guided his ship unerringly. He had every reason to believe that his bold attempt had succeeded, when a sailor on the forecastle cried :

“ Sail, ho ! ”

“ Where away ? ” asked James.

“ On the larboard quarter ! ”

As the fog was lifting a little, they were all soon able to perceive a large frigate, which was manœuvring to

intercept the *Dolphin*. She must be distanced at all hazards, and the engines must be pushed to the very uttermost, or all was lost.

"Port your helm!" cried the captain, "hard a-port!"

Then he rushed to the bridge, and stopped one of the screws, while with the other the *Dolphin* turned almost in her own length, and thus avoided crossing the bows of the Federal frigate, and ran in the same direction as she towards the channel. It was now merely a question of speed.

James Playfair was aware that in his ship's speed alone the safety of Miss Jenny, her father, and the whole ship's company now lay. The frigate was considerably ahead of the *Dolphin*. They could perceive, by the volumes of black smoke that issued from her funnel, that she was coaling up her fires; but James Playfair was not a man to remain behind.

"How is your steam?" he asked of the engineer.

"At full pressure," was the reply, "and escaping."

"Screw down your valves, then," said the captain. His orders were executed, at the risk of blowing up the ship.

The *Dolphin* increased her speed, the pistons moved with fearful rapidity, the whole engine trembled with the force of the "beats," and it was a sight to strike terror into the boldest.

"Go ahead!" cried Playfair, "faster, faster!"

"It is impossible," replied the engineer; "the safety-valves are already screwed down, the furnaces are filled to the doors."

"What does it matter? Stuff them with cotton

soaked in spirits of wine. We must push on at any price, and distance that infernal frigate."

At this command even the most daring of the sailors looked at each other, but did not hesitate to obey the order. Some bales of cotton were thrown into the engine-room, a barrel of spirits of wine was broached, and this most combustible fuel introduced into the already roaring furnaces. The noise of the furnaces was now so great that the stokers could not hear each other speak. The plates soon became red hot, the pistons moved with the rapidity of those of a locomotive, the manometers indicated a tremendous pressure; the steamer flew through the water, her timbers creaked, the chimneys vomited smoke and flame. She was going at a mad speed, but was gaining on the frigate: she passed her, she distanced her, and in ten minutes had cleared the channel.

"Saved!" cried the captain.

"Saved!" roared the crew with a cheer.

Already the Charleston light had begun to disappear in the south-west, the gleam of its fires had begun to pale, and one would have fancied all danger was over, when a shell from a gunboat cruising in the offing came hissing through the darkness. They could trace it distinctly by the lighted fuse.

The anxiety of this moment is impossible to describe. Everyone was silent, and watched in terror the course of the projectile. They could do nothing to avoid it, and in half a minute it fell with a terrible crash on the deck of the *Dolphin*.

The sailors hurried astern in terror, and no one dared to move a step; while the fuse kept spluttering with a brisk crackling noise.

But there was one brave man amongst them who dared to encounter this formidable missile. He was no other than Crockston. Lifting the shell in his brawny arms, while millions of sparks scintillated from the fuse, by an almost superhuman effort he cast it overboard.

Scarcely had it touched the water, when it exploded with a terrible report.

“Hurrah, hurrah!” cried the crew with one voice.

Crockston merely wiped his hands.

The steamer now speeded rapidly across the Atlantic. The American coast disappeared in the darkness, and the distant gleams which shot across the horizon indicated that the engagement had become general **between Morris Island and the forts of Charleston.**

CHAPTER X.

SAINT MUNGO.

AT sunrise the American coast was no longer in sight. Not a ship was visible, and the *Dolphin*, moderating her terrific pace, made for the Bermudas.

It is needless to relate the incidents of the return passage, which was by no means eventful, and ten days after she quitted Charleston the *Dolphin* sighted the Irish coast.

The most unimaginative reader may guess what passed between the young captain and his fair passenger during that period. How could Mr. Halliburt recompense Playfair's devotion and courage, if not by making him the "happiest of men?" James did not wait to get into British waters to declare his attachment; and, if Crockston may be credited, Miss Jenny received the avowal with a pleasure she did not attempt to hide.

So it fell out that, on the 14th of February of a certain year, a great crowd assembled within the dim aisles of St. Mungo, the old cathedral of Glasgow. There were sailors, merchants, labourers, magistrates, and representatives of every grade. The brave Crockston witnessed the wedding, and was got up in a most wonderful manner, in an apple-green coat with gold buttons. Uncle Vincent stood proudly beside his nephew.

In short, they were celebrating the marriage of James Playfair, of the house of Vincent Playfair and Co., of Glasgow, with Miss Jenny Halliburt, of Boston, Mass.

The ceremony was carried out with great pomp. Everyone was acquainted with the history of the *Dolphin*, and everyone thought that the young captain had earned his reward. He alone thought he had gained more than he deserved.

In the evening there was a grand entertainment at the house of Uncle Vincent; a dinner, a ball, and a great distribution of shillings to an admiring crowd in Gordon Street. At this memorable feast Crockston played his part, and performed "prodigies" of eating, though within due limits.

Everyone was delighted at the wedding—some at the happiness they felt, others at that they beheld, which is not always the case at such ceremonies.

In the evening, when the guests had retired, James Playfair took his uncle by both hands, and said :

"Well, Uncle Vincent !"

"Well, Nephew James !"

"Are you content with the charming cargo that I have brought you in the *Dolphin* ?" asked Captain Playfair, as he led forward his brave young bride.

"I should think so, indeed," replied the worthy merchant ; "and," he added, "I have sold my cotton at a profit of three hundred and sixty-five per cent !"

THE END.

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